other temple servant castes might come from other villages to assist at special annual ceremonies. In royal and chiefly Bhagavadi temples the priest was usually a Nambudiri Brahman, though a Nayar shaman was attached to the temple and periodically became possessed by the goddess and declared her will to the people. In village Nayar Bhagavadi temples, the priest was either an Embrandiri Brahman hired by the Nayars, or a Nayar; there was in addition a Nayar shaman. Daily rites in the Bhagavadi temple were similar to those in a Nambudiri temple, but annual ceremonies involved animal sacrifice by Nayars, in which Brahmans and temple servants took no part. Consistent with these differences in ritual behaviour, Nambudiris and all temple servants were vegetarians; royal, chiefly and Nayar castes ate meat. The matrilineal castes of temple servants were otherwise almost identical in general culture to Nayars, and historically were probably once Nayars. Among temple ser vants, Nambyars, Psharodis, Variyars and Puduvals disputed for ritual rank and would not interdine or intermarry. They ranked roughly [23] parallel to the chiefs of districts (with whom they had few social relations and did not interdine) and above the retainer-Nayars, who might receive food from them but not give food to them. Marars ranked below the other temple servant castes and parallel to Nayars, with whom they had few social relations outside the temple, and did not interdine or intermarry.

Below all these aristocratic castes in ritual

592 782 nagas or cobra-deities which were believed to guard each group were housed in the snake-grove in a corner of the garden and annually given offerings of milk and eggs by the karanavan in the presence of members. As well as warding 592 782 off ordinary sickness and misfortune they were particularly [58] believed responsible for the fertility or barrenness of taravad women. Special offerings were made to them if a woman failed to conceive, and a performance was held a at which men and women of a low caste called Pulluvar played instruments and sang songs to [787] entice the snakes in the grove to appear. A group of women of the taravad, after purifying themselves by fasting and sex-continence for several days previously, then became possessed by the snake-gods (who are said to have "entered into them") and performed a wild dance, bowing and swaying in a circle and sweeping their hair along the ground. In this condition they might speak with the voice of the snakes and announce what propitiations were necessary to appease [158] them. Sometimes the ceremony ended with one or more women falling into a fit. It seems 592 fairly certain that the snake-gods were (as so 786 commonly elsewhere) worshipped as phallic symbols. Since they were definitely not regarded as the spirits of dead matrilineal forbears, but were capable of alternately withholding fertility from taravad women or causing them to conceive, it is a plausible guess that they collectively symbolized the procreative powers of past genitors of the property-group, who had been so essential to its perpetuation yet

162 the most numerous and ancient group, claim that their church was founded by St. Thomas. The Portuguese converted some of them by force to Roman Catholicism and also made many converts from the lowest Hindu castes. Christians are concentrated chiefly in Cochin and Travancore.

113 (3) For a fuller discussion of the meaning of this ceremony see Gough, "Female Initiation Rites on the Malabar Coast", forthcoming in J.R.A.I.

(4) E. Colson and M. Gluckman, Seven Tribes of British Central Africa (1951), p. 129. [102]

• 787 (5) Occasionally the astrologer may divine that
753 the spirit of a recent ancestress is causing sickness to women or children. An emergency propitiation of cooked food is then made to here in the ancestor-shrine.

769 (6) In a new house there may be no stool at all,
778 unless the house was built some time before the partition by a man who died before it became occupied by the new property-group, and who thus becomes its first karanavan-spirit. If there are no stools the members of the group go back to their parent-house for ancestral propitiations for one or two generations.

212 (7) Nayar women like men could traditionally read and write Malayalam, and keep accounts.

796 (8) Onam is a harvest-festival in September; Vishu the New Year's Day, in March; and Tiruvadhira, a women's festival to Kama Devan, the Hindu god of passion.

113 (9) Murdock, Social Structure, 1949, p. 10.

(10) From the Book of Duarte Barbosa, (Hakluyt

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of the group, maintaining its accounts in her own hands and counseling the kāranavan on his transactions with outsiders. When the oldest woman was the kāranavan's own or classificatory younger sister or sister's daughter her role was unequivocally subordinate and a formal division of duties was common.

Rites of the Property Group The property group jointly invited enangar households to the ceremonies of name giving, first rice feeding, first menstruation, and death. The lineage as a whole held the tāli rite in its oldest house. However, expenses were divided between the property groups and food was cooked separately in their homes. Similarly, at a death the whole lineage observed pollution and attended the cremation, the gathering of bones on the seventh day, and the purification and feasting on the fifteenth and sixteenth days. But men and women of the deceased's own property group offered cooked rice to the spirit in their courtyard each day during the pollution period. The rites of chief mourner were performed by the junior man considered most closely related to the deceased—her eldest son in the case of a woman, and the man immediately junior to him in the property group in the case of a man.

The propitiation of cobra gods and of dead matrilineal forebears also united the group's members. The cobra deities (*nāgas*) could inflict or avert sickness in general but were especially believed responsible for the fertility or barrenness[1] of taravād women. If a woman failed to conceive, a performance was held at which men and women of a wandering caste called Pulluvar played instruments and sang songs to entice the cobras to appear. A group of women of the taravād, who had purified themselves by sex continence and fasting for several days, then became possessed by the snake gods. They performed a wild dance, bowing and swaying in a circle and sweeping their hair along the ground. In this condition they might speak with the voices of the gods and announce whatever propitiations were necessary to appease them. Sometimes one or more of the women fell into a trance.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the snake gods were worshipped as phallic symbols. They were definitely not regarded as the spirits of dead matrilineal forebears, yet were capable of withholding fertility or of causing women to conceive. Perhaps, therefore, they symbolized the procreative powers of past genitors of the property group, who

[1] Snake gods inflicted barrenness; the lineage goddess inflicted miscarriages and sickness in childbirth.

Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the *taravāḍ* might become drunk with toddy and arrack. In this condition, one or more young men might undergo possession by one of the ghosts. He performed a frenzied dance and called out to the assembled members with the voice of the ghost, declaring its will and thanking or threatening the *taravād* on its behalf. I heard of only one *taravād* where this custom persisted. Shamanistic possession by the goddess Bhagavatī or by the god Aiyappan is, however, still prevalent among rural Nāyars, and such religious possession is still more common among the lower castes.

In some *taravāds*, propitiation of lineage ghosts accompanies that of various deities associated with the *taravād*. Chief of these is the lineage's patron goddess (*dharma devī*). The goddess, though known by different names in different *taravāds*, is always thought of as a species of the generic goddess Bhagavadi or Bhādrakāli, the chief deity of the Nāyars. Each group of Nāyar *taravāds* in a village usually possesses in common a temple dedicated to Bhādrakāli, but each *taravād* has, in addition, its own goddess. Cults of the village goddess are more important in Cochin, and of the *taravād* goddess, in Kottayam. The village goddess is believed capable of withholding or inflicting on the population wholesale misfortunes of a kind which strike all men alike—smallpox, cholera, flood, drought, cyclone, cattle epidemic, or defeat in an intervillage feud. Such inflictions result from failure to propitiate the goddess or failure to uphold the moral laws of caste. The *taravād* goddess concerns herself with its members' private morality and inflicts such individual misfortunes as fever, barrenness in women or cattle, or grave financial loss.

In aristocratic *taravāds*, the goddess and the lineage ghosts may nowadays be housed together in an ancient gynasium (*kalari*) near the ancestral house—a building formerly devoted to the military training of the *taravād's* youth. The ghosts may then be propitiated with cooked food on the same day on which a cock is sacrificed to the patron goddess. In such rites, propitiation of both spirits and goddess are associated with the *taravād's* former martial glory. In the rites there usually figure one or more ancestral swords which the male forebears used during their lives. These swords are the property of the goddess and are propitiated by the *kāranvan* as representatives of the deity.

Lineage ghosts have some concern with the *taravād's* internal morality. If its members fail in hospitality to guests, squander their income, or neglect their property, the ghosts may inflict misfortunes on one or more members of the group. However, failure to propitiate the ghosts correctly is the offence most likely to provoke retribution. Conversely, if offerings are made correctly to the ghosts, they will help to preserve the *taravād* from misfortune.

The ghosts vary in their severity and in the wrongs which they punish. A *kāranavan* who amassed much property is most likely to resent extravagance on the part of his successors. Forebears who died prematurely are more punitive than those who died peacefully in old age. All ghosts, however, are somewhat capricious: a small offense may provoke stern retribution, and misdemeanors on the part of one adult may result in the sickness of another or of a child of the property group. In particular, a forebear who was injured or insulted by his juniors during life or after his death may wreak vengeance on the *taravād* even down to the seventh or eighth generation. One instance from a village headman's lineage in Kottayam will illustrate such retribution. In 1798, the property group was dying out for lack of women, and the *kāranavan* adopted a woman and her children from a related segment of his lineage. After the

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kāranavan's death, his adopted successor was too young to manage the property. This passed temporarily into the management of a man from still another branch of the same lineage. When the true claimant came of age he disputed his guardian's management. After a bitter lawsuit the guardian was deposed in a British court. He continued to live on the *taravād*'s land and to harass his young successor. When the guardian died, the young *kāranavan* in his anger failed to arrange for the cremation rites until several days had passed and the corpse had decomposed. The ghost of this proxy *kāranavan* has harrassed his successors ever since, causing many of them to die of diabetes. The present members regard this condition as a decomposition of the body during life. The ghost's anger is so great that propitiations do not wholly avert its vengeance, although special offerings temporarily delay the progress of the disease.

The misfortunes inflicted by lineage ghosts include many forms of sickness, mental disorder, female barrenness and miscarriages, all of which are attributed to actual bodily possession by a ghost. Financial loss, crop failure and the deaths of babies or cows may also result from the ghosts' displeasure. I could find no very clear distinction between the misfortunes inflicted by lineage ghosts and those brought about by the patron goddess, by malevolent alien ghosts, or by the witchcraft or sorcery of enemies. Indeed it is obvious that the Nāyars themselves do not clearly restrict particular misfortunes to particular agents. For on the occasion of a misfortune, the *kāranavan* must often consult the village astrologer (Kanisan) who makes calculations to discover the responsible agent. He then instructs the *kāranavan* how to carry out its propitiation or to accomplish its control.

However, my information suggests that some misfortunes may be more likely to be attributed to some agents than to others. Miscarriages, for example, seem to be often attributed to ancestresses, to female alien ghosts, or to the patron goddess. Barrenness is often attributed to the snake gods of the *taravād*, who are believed to guard the fertility of its women. These misfortunes seem to be less often attributed to male ghosts, although some instances are known. Perhaps most important, however, circumstances immediately preceding the misfortune may help to determine the agent. If a forebear has died recently, or if a *taravād* has failed to propitiate its lineage ghosts or patron goddess, the *kāranavan* may not even trouble to consult the astrologer, or the astrologer may merely corroborate his suspicions. Similarly, if a man has an enemy with whom he has recently quarreled and then himself falls ill with fever, he is like to assume that the enemy has engaged the services of a witch or sorcerer against him. In small villages whose population is stable, moreover, the astrologer makes it his business to know the affairs of his clients and thus to diagnose appropriate causes for their misfortunes.

Sociological analysis. A satisfactory analysis of the functions of lineage ghosts must take into account those of other supernatural agents and of secular authorities. Among the Nāyars, supernatural agents have played only a minor role in punishing offences against men, as distinct from those against themselves. This is undoubtedly because human authorities of various kinds had strong judicial functions, deriving from their incorporation in a kingdom. In the last analysis their authority was backed by the military power of the king or chief. Among Nāyars, civil disputes were tried by village headman or district chief. Certain major crimes against the kingdom's religious laws were tried in the Raja's court. They included the killing of a cow or a Brahman or fornication with lower caste persons. The killing or assault of a Nāyar

The Killing or assault of a Nayar

outside the lineage led to feuds between lineages or between larger territorial units. In Cochin, the king had more power than in Kottayam to curtail such feuds or confine them to organized duels for which a fee must be paid. Minor offences against caste law, such as dining with low caste persons, were tried by the subcaste assembly of the village and resulted in temporary excommunication of the offender's property group and the payment of a fine to the village goddess's temple.

The *kāranavan* had the legal right to punish offences within the property group and also those offences against caste law for which the caste held the property group responsible until justice had been done. Incest and murder within the lineage appear to have been punished by expulsion from the *taravād* by the *kāranavan* and from the caste by the caste assembly. In cases of grave insubordination by a junior member, the *kāranavan* had the right to deny him maintenance or access to the ancestral house until he mended his behavior.

Thus the supernatural agents of the village and the *taravād* primarily acted to force the human authorities to carry out their judicial duties. If, for example, the caste failed to excommunicate the *taravād* of an individual who had sinned against its religious laws, it was believed that the village goddess would strike the village with epidemic, flood, or some such misfortune. Similarly, if incest within the lineage went undetected or unpunished, the lineage ghosts and the patron goddess might cause the offenders to die or might bring misfortune on the *taravād* as a whole.

The fact that any member of the *taravād* may suffer as a result of the misdemeanors of any other, carries into the realm of supernatural sanctions the collective responsibility of the *taravād* in social and legal affairs. If a man breaks a ritual rule of the caste, his whole *taravād* is polluted and liable for excommunication. If a death or birth occurs, the whole lineage is temporarily polluted and excluded from normal social life. At the back of these norms lies the fact that the *taravād* is an economic and legal corporation. Its property is owned jointly, and the *taravād* is responsible for the debts of any one member. Its male members must support each other in feuds against other lineages. It is not surprising that the concept of being members one of another in secular affairs is projected into the realm of mystical retributions.

The points at which supernatural agents might replace, or act instead of, human authorities, appear to have been those where a subordinate was wronged by one who was himself a powerful authority and could manipulate the law. Thus lineage ghosts were probably particularly effective in punishing or setting to rights misdemeanors of the *kāranavan* himself. I am uncertain whether, in traditional law, junior members could sue in court for the deposition of an erring *kāranavan*. They certainly possessed this right in British law, but even so, it was very difficult before 1933 to get rid of a *kāranavan*. The lineage ghosts appear to have provided important sanctions against a *kāranavan's* misdoings, for they brought misfortune on a *taravād* whose *kāranavan* disgraced its reputation for hospitality or squandered its property. I was told that the former custom by which a junior member might be possessed by a ghost and voice its threats to the *taravād* added force to the complaints of young men who were cheated by their *kāranavans*. The fact that only the *kāranavan* may propitiate the lineage ghosts points up both his responsibility to the ghosts to ensure good conduct and prosperity in his *taravād*, and also his responsibility to his juniors to ensure the favor of the ghosts.

I have myself recorded no case in which lineage ghosts were believed to have actually prevented a crime on the part of a *kāranavan*, as distinct from punishing one. V. K.

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accumulating religious merit against the life to come. With regard to their interests in this world, the ancestors resemble their descendants.

Lineage ghosts are powerful beings who can help or harm the living. The effect which they exert on the fortunes of the living is much greater than that exerted by the living on their own. They can aid their descendants by preserving crops, cattle, houses, and children, but their punitive characteristics are those most emphasized. Offerings to ghosts are designed less toward seeking positive good than toward averting misfortune. There is no idealization of the ghosts as morally superior beings. They are human in their failings of envy and bad temper, and indeed, even more capricious than the living. They may punish wrongdoing with a degree of justice, but they do not look sympathetically into the hearts of propitiants, and are almost as likely to exact vengeance for accidental mistakes in the performance of rites as for wilful immorality. Nāyars do not attempt to enter intimate spiritual communion with them or to please them by inner suffering and renunciation. Rather, the ghosts are bought off with gifts of food in order that their envy may be appeased.

These attitudes to the ancestors[12] are, it seems, directly related to relationships with the senior generation among the living. A man's relationship with his mother's brother is, from childhood, one of stern discipline. All mother's brothers have authority over their nephews and in traditional households may inflict corporal punishment on adolescents. There is a marked lack of intimacy between senior and junior men within the *taravād*, and the sanction on a nephew's good conduct is fear of punishment rather than fear over loss of love. Good *kāranavans* are devoted to their juniors in a stern and dutiful manner. They are proud of their *taravād* as against the rest of the world, but they do not exhibit personal tenderness to their juniors. Power is vested in the senior generation; there is little feeling that a nephew could wield power over his uncle by withdrawing his emotional support. Great emphasis is placed on a formal etiquette of dignified and respectful behavior, amounting to partial avoidance, but neither party need feel that he loves the other in his heart. Nephews will not normally readily reveal hostility toward their uncles before outsiders, for they wish to preserve the dignity of the *taravād*. But they do publicly acknowledge hostility under provocation, and more frequently accuse the uncle of aggression toward themselves. That hostility is a normal component of relationships with mother's brothers is proverbial among Nāyars. They recognize this as the reason why a formal etiquette of behavior is indispensable. And even in spite of the stringent rules regulating the intercourse of mother's brother and sister's son, physical aggression between them may occur. In spite of the supernatural sanctions against violence within the lineage, I heard several stories of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers. Aged *kāranavans* of large *taravāds* often complain of their loneliness. They may not behave intimately with their juniors and know in their hearts that they are hated and envied. "Indeed," as one Nāyar remarked, "in an old-fashioned *taravād* the position of the *kāranavan* is not safe." The office of *kāranavan* is, of course, much coveted. Junior men commonly number themselves off in order of age-rank as second, third, fourth men, etc., and with divided feelings await the demise of those above them which will raise them to higher rank. The relationship between older and younger brothers, own or classificatory, is only slightly less stern and formal than that between mother's brother and sister's son.

The relationship of a woman with her mother's brother is less harsh than that

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eldest son also traditionally observed *dīkṣā* for his father along with the matrilineal heir.

Age-rank within the *taravād* finds expression in the rites. Among Nambūdiri Brahmans, if an unmarried but initiated boy dies, his father may perform his funeral and anniversary rites. For the souls of father and son are dependent upon one another for salvation. But among Nāyars, a man may not take part in funeral rites for one junior to him in the *taravād*, for respect toward juniors is inappropriate. A Nāyar who dies leaving no junior old enough to act as chief mourner is therefore buried without ceremony and no rites are performed for his ghost.

Nāyars have adopted the Brahmanical belief that funeral and anniversary rites assist the spirit in its passage to another world, and that immersion of the ashes in sacred water affords it peace. Like the Brahmans, they acknowledge the theory of rebirth, and hold that a spirit which is correctly propitiated after death is likely to be eventually reborn in a high estate. As in the case of the Brahmans, the theory of *karma* provides the Nāyars with a moral rationale for their high position in the caste system, and it is chiefly in this connection that I have heard it quoted. It is difficult to discover how old are Sanskritic beliefs concerning the soul among Nāyars, and they are not uniform at the present day. Most Nāyars use the word *pretam* to refer to the ghost or the soul in all contexts. This is a Sanskrit word (*preta*) for a malevolent ghost, but it is used by Nambūdiri Brahmans only for alien malevolent ghosts. A few Nāyars stated that that aspect of the soul which is reborn is the *ātmā*. This Sanskrit word is used by Brahmans for the soul in connection with rebirth and with union with the universal soul, called *paramātmā*. The *ātmā*, these Nāyar informants say, is neither malevolent nor beneficent. It cannot be understood by ordinary people and is a subject for philosophers. The *pretam*, by contrast, is the punitive ghost of an ancestor or of one who died violently. It can be only too easily understood even by the ignorant and does not require deep study. This belief in two souls, or in a soul and a ghost, may be modern, for it was given by only a few younger informants.

At all events, the Sanskritic rites of death are customarily adapted by Nāyars to belief in a malevolent *pretam*, for at every step fear of the *pretam* is referred to. Whereas Brahmans perform the rites ostensibly in order that the soul may be at peace, Nāyars have traditionally performed them in active fear of the ghost's retaliation should its comfort not be ensured. During the days of pollution, Nāyars offer rice balls before a palmyra stem set up in the yard before the ancestral house. The *pretam* of the deceased is believed to enter this stem, and it is believed that it will attack the *taravād* with further death or with sickness if the offerings are not satisfactorily performed. During the offerings each Nāyar propitiant in turn wears round his waist a piece of cloth torn from the wrapper of the corpse in order to associate himself with the spirit. But inside this cloth Nāyars also tuck a knife, blade uppermost, to ward off the spirit's attack. After the offerings are made, both Brahmans and Nāyars clap their wet hands to summon crows to eat the rice balls. If the crows do not come, it is believed that the spirit has not received the offering. This may then be repeated on the advice of the astrologer. In Tanjore, Brahmans seemed to regret the miscarriage of the offering only for the sake of the spirit. But Nāyars regard it as an extremely evil omen, and fear the ghost's retaliation in the form of a second death within the *taravād*. The Brahmanical ceremonies themselves contain rites of segregation from the deceased which are susceptible to the interpretation that those who perform them wish to be rid of him. Such, for example, is the rite of dashing a pot of water at the head end of

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to alien ghosts are built in the garden of the *taravād* house. They are propitiated annually or in emergency, usually with a cock sacrifice and an offering of toddy. Such alien ghosts are of a lineage other than that of the hosts and are usually of different caste. If a member of the *taravād* dies violently, his successors take care of his ghost in the course of their ancestral propitiations and do not commonly build a special shrine for it in their garden. They may fear such a ghost more than they fear the ghosts of forebears who died naturally, but they will not speak of this to outsiders. Rather, they are likely to deny to others that violent deaths have taken place in their lineage in the past, particularly if the deceased was a suicide or was executed in punishment for a crime. Such a ghost may however be regarded as a source of misfortunes by a Nāyar household of another lineage or by a household of one of the lower castes, expecially it the deceased died on its land or was in some way connected with it. It is then enshrined as an alien ghost in the garden of this house.

Most commonly, an alien ghost housed in a Nāyar garden is that of a former serf of the property group, of one of the "exterior" agricultural laboring castes of Pulayans, Parayans or Pānans. The legends of such ghosts are nowadays often forgotten, but several Nāyars told me that they are likely to be the ghosts of serfs who died after a quarrel with their masters or who were actually killed by them. The ghost is hostile to the *taravād* as a group and demands regular sacrifices if misfortune is to be averted. It is more hostile and capricious than are lineage ghosts, although it can also afford a certain vague protection to the *taravād* if it is correctly propitiated. Propitiations are made annually by a person of the ghost's own caste, often a Parayan or Pulayan of a family now serving the Nāyar property group. The propitiant's fee and the materials for the offering are provided by the *taravād*.

An alien ghost tends to be angered by persons who walk near its shrine at times other than those of propitiations. Some ghosts are angered only if people approach them round midnight or midday. At night, however, ghosts are able to wander some distance away from their shrines, so that it is possible to approach and offend them without being conscious of trespassing. In case of sickness or misfortune, the astrologer may diagnose that someone of the *taravād* has unwittingly offended the ghost and may order an emergency offering. After he has made the sacrifice, the low caste propitiant is likely to become possessed by the ghost and, while in a state of frenzy, to declare its satisfaction or to order further offerings. He may also take the opportunity to voice any grievances harbored by the *taravād's* low caste servants against its *kāranavan*.

A ghost of this kind may occasionally harm someone from outside its hosts' *taravād* who walks on their land at night. It could also harm its low caste propitiant if he failed in the correct performance of the rites. Usually, however, its attacks are confined to its hosts.

The ghost of such a hostile servant is to be distinguished from that of a servant who died heroically and voluntarily in the service of his Nāyar masters. Many Nāyar *taravāds* have legends of faithful serfs who died defending their masters' house during war, saved the lives of women and children, rescued their patrons from accidental death, or committed suicide in grief when a Nāyar patron had been killed. After death the ghosts of these servants are housed along with the *taravād's* lineage ghosts and are honored in ancestral propitiations. Nāyars point out that their heroism even makes the difference of caste irrelevant, for food is offered to them before it is offered

to lineage ghosts who were junior to them in age. The living of the *taravād* themselves make offerings to them and do them obeisance, whereas the ghosts of hostile serfs are especially polluting and malevolent and can be propitiated only by persons of their own caste.

Even so, the ghost of such a lower caste person who is honored for heroism by the *taravād* of his masters may, if he died violently, be feared as an alien ghost by other *taravāds*. In Kottayam in the eighteenth century, for example, there lived a certain Nāyar village headman who had as his servant a man of the Tiyyar caste of cultivators. During the invasions of Malabar by the Mysorean Muslim general, Tippu Sultan, in the 1780's, the Nāyar's *taravād* was threatened with conquest and forcible conversion to Islam. Having sent the women and children of his house into hiding, the *kāranavan* prayed before his lineage's patron goddess until the Muslims were at his gates. He then persuaded his Tiyyar servant to kill him, being unwilling to face the disgrace of circumcision at the hands of the Muslims. Having slain his master, the servant hid himself in an outhouse of the *taravād*. In the night he went forth and attacked the Muslims single-handed, killing several of them to avenge his master, before he was himself put to death. The ghost of this servant is now propitiated along with the lineage ghosts of his master's *taravād*. It is also, however, propitiated as an alien ghost by several other *taravāds* in the neighborhood.

Occasionally, malevolent alien ghosts are those of Nāyars who died violently, often in expiation of some crime. They may have committed suicide after being outcaste for contravention of religious laws, or in the case of a woman, may have been killed by their matrilineal kinsmen after cohabiting with low caste men. A woman called Kadangōtt Makkam, also of Kottayam, became a ghost in this way. According to legend, she was suspected by her sister-in-law of having sexual relations with an Oilmonger. Her brothers banished her from the *taravād*. She was agonized at the thought of leaving her children, and drowned them in the *taravād's* well. Her *kāranavan* and brothers were then obliged to stab her to death—the customary penalty for fornication outside the caste, and perhaps, also, for murder within the *taravād*. She became an alien ghost particularly liable to prevent women from bearing children, and is established in the gardens of several local *taravāds*.

Such alien ghosts, although Nāyar, are also propitiated by an officiant of the lower caste. The propitiant is usually from some caste which specializes in exorcism and counter-magic, such as Mannāns (washermen), Kanisans (astrologers, who in any case diagnose the misfortune and advise the propitiation) or Pānans (umbrella-makers, exorcists and agricultural workers). The mode of propitiation is the same as in the case of a low caste ghost.

Finally, an alien ghost is occasionally that of a Brahman who died violently. Brahman ghosts, or Brahmarākṣas, unlike all other ghosts, must be propitiated with vegetarian offerings by a Brahman priest hired for the purpose. But Brahman priests, unlike low caste officiants, never enter a state of voluntary possession by ghosts. Religious possession is particularly a low caste institution. It is not practiced by Brahmans, and when found among Nāyars, it is practiced by young men, women, and other persons who lack secular power. Brahmans do not need to become possessed by their ghosts and deities, for they have the power to demand whatever offerings and fees they require. Low caste propitiants need the authority of a supernatural agent in order to make demands on their high caste masters.

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No clear distinction is made between alien ghosts and minor malevolent deities, or demons, which are also sometimes called *pretams* in Cochin. Some demons are found throughout Malabar. Chief of these is Kuttichāttan, a spirit capable of all kinds of poltergeist activities. Sometimes, on the advice of an astrologer, a *taravād* privately sets up a shrine to Kuttichāttan and arranges for his annual propitiation by a low caste person in the same manner as an alien ghost. Often, indeed, local myths of particular Kuttichāttans suggest that they have been derived from alien ghosts, whose legends became fancifully embroidered with miraculous elements. The story of one Kuttichāttan, in this case enshrined in a Nambūdiri Brahman garden and propitiated by a washerman, will illustrate this process. The god was said to have been born from a sacrificial fire during ancestral ceremonies in a Brahman house. The Brahman house-owner brought him up, and when he was adult sent him to graze cattle as a serf. One day the Brahman's red-horned bull was missing, and the serf admitted that he had killed and eaten it. The Brahman tied him to the rafters of the cowshed and had him beaten to the point of death. Afterwards, the serf turned into a Kuttichāttan and disappeared, but hovered above the Nambūdiri household bringing misfortune until a shrine was set up for him. Educated Nāyar informants surmised that the spirit had originally been that of an executed serf, later glorified by his propitiants as Kuttichāttan. Similarly, Kadangōtt Makkam, whose story was related above, is spoken of as a form of Bhagavadi in some *taravāds* where she is propitiated.

I have so far mentioned the kinds of alien ghosts which may be attached to individual *taravāds* in Cochin. In fact, however, cults of spirits and deities of the village are grander and more numerous in Cochin than are those of the *taravād*. This parallels the fact that the Cochin village was traditionally highly centralized as a unit of local government. In this area, the temple of the village goddess Bhagavadi is managed either by a Nāyar village headman's lineage or collectively by a village community of commoner Nāyars. Only the Nāyars and castes above them might traditionally enter the temple, but all castes owed allegiance to the deity and took part in her annual festival. The lowest castes of former serfs, and some other polluting castes such as washermen, took part in the festival through the medium of one or more minor malevolent deities or particularly important local ghosts which occupied small shrines at a distance from the main temple. Such spirits were thought of as servants of the goddess, and at her will could "sow the seeds" of smallpox or other misfortunes in the village. To avert such misfortune not only must the Nāyars and other high castes propitiate the goddess herself, but the lower castes must also assemble, bringing imitation bullocks and horses—the vehicles of the deity's demon servants—and make offerings to these demons. Selected persons from these lower castes became possessed by the village ghosts or demons and, in masked dances, made oracular pronouncements both to their own and the higher castes. During the festival, and for several weeks before it, Nāyar households must also entertain these shamans privately in the courtyards of their houses and make gifts of grain to them which warded off the demons' wrath.

In Kottayam, the village was traditionally less centralized. Each Nāyar *taravād* was an independent landowning body owing only tenuous allegiance to a chief. Cults of deities and ghosts associated with particular *taravāds* are therefore more prominent than are those of village temples, and it is in the former rather than the latter that ritual cooperation between high and low castes is most prominent. Whereas a Cochin

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taravād may enshrine only one or two alien ghosts particularly associated with it, leaving the majority of local ghosts to be propitiated at the central village temple. a wealthy Nāyar *taravād* in Kottayam builds shrines in its garden for six or eight alien ghosts and finances elaborate propitiations on their behalf. Such spirits are in Kottayam called *teyyams*. As in Cochin, the spirits are often the ghosts of Nāyar or low caste persons who died violent deaths—for example, girls who died violently before marriage, women excommunicated or executed for sexual offences, persons killed by lightning, servants executed by their masters, or warriors who died in battle. Usually, miraculous elements are interwoven into their legends. Sometimes, they become merged with common minor deities such as Vettakkorumagan, Kandhākaranan, or some species of Bhagavadi. In a few cases, they have become associated with some episode from the puranic myths and their human origin is lost sight of. As in the village temple rites of Cochin, these ghosts in Kottayam are propitiated, on behalf of the Nāyar *taravād*, by selected persons from the lower castes. These are chiefly Vannans (washermen) and Malayans (exorcists).[22] Annually, the propitiants assemble in the Nāyar courtyard and recite the myths of origin of their spirits. Later, they make and receive blood sacrifices to the spirits, and finally, while possessed by them, perform spectacular masked dances and declare the spirits' satisfaction to an assembled company of many castes. These festivals take place throughout the whole of several nights in the month of January to February and draw vast crowds from the surrounding neighborhood.[23]

I have so far dealt with modes of propitiation of, and possession by, alien ghosts. In addition, both in Cochin and Kottyam, Nāyars believe that certain persons can, through appropriate rites and spells, gain private control over alien ghosts and minor deities and engage in witchcraft or sorcery through their power. In what I call witchcraft,[24] the individual uses the power of his patron spirit in order to take the form of a bull, dog, jackal, or other animal. In this form he touches his foe in the night, causing him to fall ill with fever, to become insane, or even to die. Witches always belong to one of the lowest castes of Parayans, Pulayans, Pānans or (in Kottayam) Malayans. They usually attack persons of Nāyar or other high caste whom they themselves hate. Occasionally, however, a normal person of any caste, even a Nāyar, may hire a witch to attack a personal enemy.

A sorcerer performs rites and recites spells to an alien ghost or minor deity over which he has control and causes it to pass magically into the body of an enemy, thus bringing about fever, miscarriages in women, insanity or death. Sorcerers can also bring about the deaths of cattle. Nāyars attribute sorcery chiefly to lower caste persons. For whereas the Nāyars predominantly worship Bhagavadi and certain Sanskrit deities, the castes below Nāyars specialize in the propitiation of evil ghosts and minor deities, and it is solely with these lower supernatural beings that witchcraft and sorcery are associated. Washermen, astrologers and umbrellamakers, who specialize in exorcising ghosts from the bodies of patients, are particularly suspected by Nāyars of themselves engaging in sorcery. Nāyars do, however, occasionally suspect Nāyars of other lineages, particularly affines with whom they have quarreled, of practicing sorcery or of hiring low caste witches or sorcerers to attack them.

Witchcraft does not usually require the diagnosis of an astrologer. A Nāyar of nervous disposition simply suspects that a low caste man has bewitched him if he falls ill after encountering an animal in the night. Sorcery is usually diagnosed by an

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787 astrologer, who, however, normally leaves his patient to guess which of his enemies
754 has injured him. Public accusations of witchcraft and sorcery are theoretically not
564 permitted, although Nāyars have been known to take the law into their own hands and inflict beatings on Pānans and Parayans whom they believed to have attacked them
755 through witchcraft. Normally, sickness resulting from possession by a ghost or demon
754 as a result of witchcraft or sorcery is counteracted by exorcism. Local specialists of
564 the castes of washermen, astrologers or umbrellamakers are hired to attend at the patient's house. There they make sacrifices to patron spirits whom they themselves
787 control. Later, they voluntarily become possessed by these spirits and perform frenzied dances in hideous masks before the patient, calling upon the alien malevolent spirit to leave him. The patient usually goes into a hysterical fit, after which the sickness may subside. Exorcism by masked dancing of this kind is known as *kōlam tullal*. Any form of rites or spells to control ghosts or minor deities, whether evil or beneficent, is covered by the general term *mantravādam*.

Analysis

769 The analysis of beliefs and practices centering about alien ghosts involves the
182 following questions: 1) Why are alien ghosts appropriate objects of fear? 2) How do these fears fit into the general pattern of Nāyar handling of aggression? 3) What psychic and social functions are fulfilled by the institutions surrounding alien ghosts? The answers to these questions will relate the alien ghost patterns to the functioning of the local community and its subgroups, and to the expressive needs of individuals.

769 *Alien ghosts as objects of fear.* Alien ghosts are individuals who suffered unusual or
152 premature death. People expect them to be especially malevolent. This expectation
182 is based on their presumed envy of the living, and in some instances on the fact that, having found death through violence and hatred, they can be expected to continue to be violent and hateful. Hence they are appropriate targets of fear.

Alien ghosts are the focus of more violent fears and hatreds than are the ghosts of matrilineal forebears, for they can be even more capricious and wantonly punitive.
[865] As we have seen, Nāyars do express a limited amount of aggression against lineage ghosts, and I have suggested that this is because their aggression training is not so strict as to prevent them from acknowledging to themselves some degree of hostility toward living matrilineal elders. Their projected aggression toward lineage ghosts, however, is constrained—like their aggression toward living elders. These ghosts, although punitive, are more protective than alien ghosts.

Alien ghosts are congenial objects for more violent aggression and fear, precisely
[564] because they *are* alien. They are securely outside the individual's most significant set of personal relations—those of the lineage. Even Brahmans, whose aggression training is so severe that they are unable to acknowledge hostility between themselves and their own ancestral ghosts, express fear and hatred of alien ghosts.

I assume that the fear and hostility which is directed at alien ghosts really has its source elsewhere. My reason for this assumption is that, although the fact that they died unnaturally provides a plausible reason why alien ghosts should be thought of as generally hostile, there is in most cases no ostensible reason in the individual's own personal relationships to alien ghosts which would account for their being chosen as the targets of hatred and fear. Presumably, if we follow psychoanalytic theory, the ultimate sources of these fears lie in familial relationships. This would seem reasonable

627 613 152 754 182 wife, his matrilineal juniors were believed to be especially likely to hire sorcerers to harm her. For they would fear that their *kāranavan* might secretly convey to his wife gifts and cash which belonged to his *taravād*. Yet without their *kāranavan's* support they would be unable to enter an open group conflict with the *taravād* of his wife. The belief that affines might practice sorcery, and the existence of ritual remedies against such attacks, therefore provided for the expression of projected aggression against persons of other lineages within the caste. I do not know whether Nāyars did, in fact, hire sorcerers to harm their affines, or merely suspected this of others, but it seems very probable that they did. If so, sorcery also provided a covert mode for the expression of direct aggression outside the lineage too. It must be noticed that although, in the case cited, these hostilities arose as much in the conflict of interests between the *kāranavan* and his matrilineal kin as between the *kāranavan's* wife and her husband's *taravād*, their institutionalized expression was not allowed to disrupt the *taravād*. For the *kāranavan's* matrilineal kin could not practice, and could not be suspected of practicing, sorcery against the *kāranavan* himself. Instead, members of the *kāranavan's* lineage were believed to move (and probably did move) against his wife's lineage as a group, thus endangering the solidarity of the marriage but indirectly promoting unity within each lineage.

564 578 152 182 754 Turning to the relations between castes, it is obvious that as endogamous groups of different rank, occupation and wealth, castes were in many contexts outgroups to each other whose interests were opposed. As landlords and noncultivating tenants, the Brahmans and Nāyars wished to exploit the lower castes for their labor; conversely, the lower castes wished to obtain as much compensation as possible from the higher castes. In these circumstances there was great realistic potential for hostility between castes, quite apart from the fact that the internal unity of each caste probably required the displacement of considerable additional aggression toward outgroups in other castes. Organized physical aggression between castes was, however, not feasible. For castes were economically and politically interdependent and linked by hereditary, interhousehold service ties. The lower castes could not rise up against the higher castes who employed them and held political power, and the higher castes could not wantonly harrass the lower castes on whom they depended for services. Instead, it was in the relations between castes that the institutions of witchcraft and sorcery were most prominent. The general tendency was for the Nāyars to accuse the lower castes of these evils. This is understandable, for the Nāyars with their wealth and authority had particular reason to suspect the lower castes of envy and hidden hatred. This generalized projection of aggression toward the lower castes served to enhance the internal unity of the Nāyar caste. At the same time, the open expression of aggression against particular low caste persons was institutionally controlled. For the astrologer did not customarily name his client's enemy, and even if the Nāyar had his own suspicions, open accusations of witchcraft and sorcery were not permitted.

769 564 787 152 182 [766] The lower castes were considered peculiarly appropriate propitiants for alien ghosts, and only low caste people could voluntarily undergo possession by them. This suggests that the Nāyar fear of direct attack from an alien ghost, like the fear of witchcraft and sorcery, expressed in a disguised manner the Nāyars' projected aggression against the lower castes. The association between lower castes and alien ghosts was, for Nāyars, indeed appropriate, for both were ritually polluting. Among Nāyars, the corpses of persons who die violently or from epidemic are unusually polluting and

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their ghosts unusually dangerous. Instead of being burned by their matrilineal kin, the corpses of these persons are buried hastily by men of the washermen's caste—a caste particularly associated with demon propitiation and voluntary ghost possession. The spirits of these victims become alien ghosts. In their anger they may possess and cause injury to persons of any caste in their community. But only the lower castes can induce shamanistic possession by them, and it is chiefly (some say only) the lower castes who can control them to work good or ill. Appropriately, Nāyars believe that low caste witches perform additional rites connected with highly polluting objects and places in order to enhance their evil power. Witches, for example, are believed to procure a magical substance by abstracting the foetus from the body of a pregnant woman and boiling it in a cremation ground, to the accompaniment of spells to a favorite ghost or patron demon.

There is, however, a qualitative difference between the Nāyar fear of direct attack from an alien ghost and the fear of witchcraft or sorcery. An element of morality enters into the former fear, even though alien ghosts are more wanton and capricious than lineage ghosts. Although they are malevolent and hateful, alien ghosts must, like lineage ghosts, be respected and propitiated, and there is a feeling that they have the right to be as they are. When they are associated with regular cults of the *taravād* and the village, moreover, alien ghosts can also afford some vague measure of protection from misfortune to those Nāyars who conscientiously arrange for their propitiation. It follows, therefore, that the alien ghost attached to a *taravād* or a village temple acts in some measure as a kind of conscience for the Nāyar in his relations with low caste people. For a Nāyar *taravād* which arranges grand festivals for its alien ghosts, lavishing gifts on the low caste officiants who propitiate them and represent them as oracles, is also likely to be a *taravād* which has good relations with its lower caste servants in all contexts of living. In the case of the Nāyar relation to alien ghosts of his *taravād* and his village, as in the case of his relation to lineage ghosts, the concept of reprojection of the superego may therefore be appropriate, as well as that of the simple projection of aggressive id impulses. For while there seems no doubt that the Nāyar projects on to alien ghosts some of the aggression which he has toward the lower castes, just as he projects onto lineage ghosts some of the aggression he feels toward matrilineal elders, these ghosts act also as stern monitors of his conduct in relationships, respectively, with the lower castes and with matrilineal kin.

The situation is somewhat different with regard to beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery. It is true that a Nāyar who has recently wronged an untouchable or an affine may be one most likely to suspect untouchables or affines of attacks by sorcery. But he does not—at least openly—phrase the attack in terms of justifiable retaliation for his own wrongdoing. Instead, he speaks of some anonymous affine or low caste person who, out of his own envy and wickedness, has used his evil power over a patron ghost in order to harm an innocent person. Nor does the Nāyar respond to the attacks of witches and sorcerers by humble propitiation of the possessing demon. Instead he engages a low caste practitioner of his own to exorcise the demon with the help of a superior ghostly power. Thus, while both the belief in sorcery and the public cults of alien ghosts probably reveal, indirectly, the projection of Nāyar aggression against out-groups, they operate in different social contexts. Witchcraft and sorcery are regarded, by Nāyars who are the recipients of these attacks, as the evil work of envious persons against those more successful than themselves. They are seen as covert substitutes for

dons his mask and becomes possessed by his *teyyam*, he may adopt an authoritative or aggressive attitude to his Nāyar hosts, demanding gifts or threatening them with misfortune before conferring his blessing. He may not, of course, physically attack the Nāyars. Indeed, he is, while possessed, likely to solicit admiration by inflicting physical suffering on himself, usually by burning himself with torches or rolling in the red hot ashes of a fire. After the oracular pronouncements, having doffed his mask, the officiant again becomes the servant of the *taravād* and humbly accepts his fee. For the low caste officiant, therefore, these festivals permit a limited, stylized expression of aggression and a temporary assumption of authority toward their high caste masters. At the same time, the festivals underline both the need for interdependence between the castes, and ultimately, the lower castes' permanent, secular role as submissive servants.

Functions of the cults of alien ghosts. My discussion of alien ghost institutions in the general context of Nāyar handling of aggression has necessarily pointed to some of their social and psychic functions. These may, it seems, be summarized as follows. First, the cults permitted, in a harmless manner, the handling of aggression which arose in relations between castes. Second, whether or not witchcraft or sorcery were actually practiced, the belief that those whom he wrongfully harassed could arm themselves with these ritual weapons must have acted as a deterrent to the Nāyar authority who was tempted to oppress low caste subordinates, or to favor his affines at the expense of his matrilineal juniors. Through witchcraft and sorcery, alien ghosts, therefore, might help to prevent injustices which could not readily be brought before a secular authority.

Third, these institutions brought together in ritual cooperation the very categories of persons whose mutual ambivalence provided the ultimate motive force for the institutions themselves. In the case of witchcraft and sorcery, there existed a complicated interplay of hostilities and alliances which, over time, balanced each other. All Nāyars feared the harmful supernatural power of the lower castes, and this gave unity to their caste. In a particular instance, however, a Nāyar who believed himself attacked by an individual low caste practitioner, or by another Nāyar with the help of such a practitioner, could obtain relief only by engaging the ritual assistance of some other officiant from one of the suspected castes. In the case of the cults of alien ghosts institutionally attached to his *taravād* and his village temple, it seems that the Nāyar's generalized fear of and hostility to outgroups was turned outside the area of human relations and focussed upon supernatural agents feared by all. But again, only willing and friendly ritual cooperation with lower caste officiants could ward off supernatural attacks from the whole community, including the Nāyars.

It seems probable to me that one of the most important functions of all religious ritual, if not the important, is this resolution of conflict within individuals and within groups. The manner in which this is achieved varies greatly. The rituals of rebellion[35] and the initiation rites[36] analyzed by Gluckman, for example, on the surface bear little resemblance to Nāyar cults of the dead. But as Gluckman has shown, their broad social functions are the same. Institutionalized religious ritual, like the private rites of obsessional neurotics, permits to the individual a disguised expression of his aggression, while at the same time reassuring him that his control over the direct physical expression of aggression is unimpaired. But institutionalized ritual does far more than this. It has not only temporary therapeutic value for the individual, but is also interwoven

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showered on it, and it is often garlanded. Incantations and *mantras* are recited by the priest during the ceremony.

Bell-metal oil lamps are lit in front of the images and their number is usually 3, 5 or 7. In each lamp there are 5 to 7 wicks pointing in different directions. Only coco-nut oil or *ghee* is used in these ceremonial lamps. In front of these lamps are placed three banana leaves with the cut end of the leaf facing the image and the tip pointing away from it, facing north or east. On one of the leaves some uncooked rice is placed and a husked coco-nut is kept over it, while in the other leaf unhusked paddy is heaped with a coco-nut placed on it. The eyes of the coco-nut are away from the snake idol and are towards the tip of the banana leaf. On the third leaf are placed a few small bananas of a special variety called *kadali*, because *kadali* is referred to in the Vedas.

The boiled rice offering is then placed near the shrine and some money is offered to the idol by dropping it in the oil of the lamp. These preparations are offered to the snake god who is supposed to partake of them. Thereafter the *prasad* or the offering is distributed among the members of the family, and the priest gets half of it. The *prasad* must not be eaten by a crow or dog as this is a bad omen. After the worship, the contents of the leaves are given to the priest who therefore takes great pains to see that this particular ceremony is well conducted.

Once a month or once every three months, low caste Hindus called Pulluvans visit the houses which have snake shrines. Usually they come on Tuesdays or Fridays, and they sing songs in praise of the snake gods. This is done in a rather crude manner to the accompaniment of crude single-stringed instruments called *veena kunju*. For this invocation, an oil lamp is lit before the shrine, and the above-mentioned three banana leaves and their respective contents are placed before the image of the serpent. Usually a woman accompanies the male singer and joins in the chorus, playing the while upon a crude drum. After the praise has been adequately rendered, the ceremony is brought to a close and the musician gets his share of money and materials. This ceremony is meant to propitiate and

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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KURUP NÂYARS.

*141 *564 [114] The number examined, 8, is not, of course, enough on which to base dependable averages. The men of this clan are—judging by the average such as it is—the tallest of all those examined. Tall, straight, well-bred looking men they are, carrying with them an air of independence and self-respect as one of the old fighting clans. It will be observed that the cephalic length is greater than the average for all the Nâyars, while the cephalic index is less, showing that they are longer headed, and more dolichocephalic than the average Nâyar. Again, the measure of vertex to chin is much greater than in any other clan; and their faces are narrower. The index $\frac{\text{Bizygomatic} \times 100}{\text{Vertex to chin}}$ gives the Nambûtiri one of 69.5, all the Nâyars excluding the Kurups 66.2, and the Kurups 64.5.

[551] The men are called by their clan name, Râma Kurup, Krishna Kurup, Gôvinda Kurup. The name Rama seems to be a favourite one, as four out of eight were so called.

Ages ranging between 20 and 72 *.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 8.	To stature =100.
Stature	174·9	163·4	167·1	...
Height, sitting	88·8	82·9	85·7	51·3
Do. kneeling	130·3	120·2	124·1	74·3
Span	184·8	173·0	178·6	106·8
Chest	89·4	78·3	82·4	49·3
Shoulders	42·2	38·8	40·4	24·2
Left cubit	51·0	45·1	47·5	28·4
Left hand length	20·8	18·2	19·3	11·5
Do. width	8·8	7·7	8·2	...
Left middle finger	12·3	10·9	11·5	6·9
Hips	28·4	24·5	26·4	15·2
Left foot length	28·0	24·9	26·4	15·2
Do. width	9·5	8·0	8·8	...
Cephalic length	20·6	18·9	19·5	11·7
Do. width	14·6	13·4	14·0	...
Do. index	74·6	68·9	72·0	...
Bigoniac	10·9	9·6	10·3	...
Bizygomatic	13·7	12·3	13·1	...
Maxillo-zygomatic index	83·5	76·7	79·6	...
Nasal length	5·3	4·4	4·8	2·87
Do. width	3·9	3·4	3·7	...
Do. index	84·1	64·2	76·2	...
Vertex to tragus	14·3	12·3	13·2	7·9
Do. to chin	21·8	19·0	23·3	12·1
Middle finger to patella	13·0	3·6	9·2	5·51

[787] * The man who said he was by his horoscope 72 was put down by me as looking 58.

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unsuitability to the time in which they exist, which is apparent amongst those societies more liable to change.

But whatever the reasons may be, the relations between the sexes in Malabar are unusually happy. They seem to be more than commonly natural. The most obvious reason for their being so is that they are less influenced by considerations of property than elsewhere. The desire to maintain property within the family is the curse of all natural relations between the sexes. What strange customs has it not put upon mankind! We have some strange examples of these in Southern India, as when a woman is married to the door-post of the house, and the house owner begets children on her to inherit his property; or when a man marries his child to a woman, and himself begets children on her, and the individual who stands in the position of father may be but a few years older than the son. But we need not look farther than Europe for anomalous customs which inhibit the working of the law of natural selection. Malabar is fairly free from unfortunate customs, and it is perfectly fair to say the marital relation amongst the Nâyars is more than commonly natural.

A description of the ceremonies and formalities connected with the marital connexion will now be attempted. The first of these, described as "most peculiar, distinctive, and unique," is the Tâli-kettu-kalyânam. The details of this ceremony vary in different parts of Malabar, but the ceremony itself, in some form, is essential, and must be performed for every Nâyar girl before she attains puberty. Tâli-kettu-kalyânam means marriage by tying the tâli, or ceremony of tying the tâli, a small golden ornament, worn on the neck, the ordinary badge of marriage amongst the Dravidian peoples.

The following account was given by M.R.Ry. K. R. Krishna Menon, retired Sub-Judge, to the Commission:—

"The Tâli-kettu-kalyânam is somewhat analogous to what a Dévadâsi (dancing girl attached to pagodas) of other countries undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal families, and those of certain Edaprabhûs, a Kshatriya,—and among the Chârna sect, a Nedungâdi,—is invited to the girl's house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and in the presence of friends and castemen ties tâli round her neck, and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble. Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined

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along with those of the boys of her Enangan (a recognised member of one's own clan) families, and the boy whose horoscope is found to agree with hers, is marked out as a fit person to tie the tâli, and a day is fixed for the tâli-tying ceremony by the astrologer, and information given to the Káranavan of the boy's family. On the appointed day the boy is invited to a house near that of the girl, where he is fed with his friends by the head of the girl's family. The feast is called 'Ayani Unu,' and the boy is thenceforth called 'Manaválan' or 'Pillai' bridegroom. From the house in which the Manaválan is entertained, a procession is formed, preceded by men with sword and shield shouting a kind of war-cry. In the meantime a procession starts from the girl's house, with similar men and cries, and headed by a member of her taravâd, to meet the other procession, and after meeting the Manaválan, he escorts him to the girl's house. After entering the pandal erected for that purpose, he is conducted to a seat of honour and there his feet are washed by the brother of the girl, who receives a pair of cloths on the occasion. The Manaválan is then taken to the centre of the pandal where bamboo-mats, carpets, and white cloths are spread, and seated there. The brother of the girl then carries her from inside of the house, and after going round the pandal three times, places her at the left side of the Manaválan, and the father of the girl then presents a new cloth tied in a kambli to the pair, and with this new cloth (technically called 'mantravadi') they change their dress. The wife of the Káranavan of the girl's taravâd, if she be of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting anklets, etc. The Purohita called 'Elayatu' (a low class of Brâhmans) then gives the tali to the Manaválan, and the family astrologer shouts 'Muhurtham' (auspicious hour), and the Manaválan, putting his sword on the lap, ties tali round the girl's neck, who is then required to hold an arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families a Brâhmini sings certain songs intended to bless the couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her presence, a certain Nayâr who is versed in songs performs the office. The boy and the girl are then carried by Enangans to a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house, where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in some neighbouring tank or river, holding each other's hands. After changing cloths, they come home preceded by a procession, which varies in importance according to the wealth of the girl's family. Tom-toms and elephants usually form part of the procession, and saffron water is sprinkled. When they come home the doors of the house are all shut, which the Manaválan is required to force open. He then enters the house, and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt

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"The variations of the Sambandham are the Pudamuri, Vastradánam, Uzhamporukkuka, Vítáram Kayaruka, etc., which are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malayali who would not readily understand what is meant by *Sambandham tudan guga* (to begin Sambandham). The meaning of this phrase which means "to marry" is understood throughout Kéralam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it.

"It is thus found that Sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among Marumakkattayam Nâyars. It will also be found on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this Sambandham ceremony, all over the Kéralam, are in the main the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically: the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony: the usual hours at which the ceremony takes place: the presentation of the *danam* (gifts) to the Brahmans: the sumptuous banquet: the meeting of the bride and the bridegroom,—are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted Sambandhams in all parts of Kéralam alike. But here I would beg to state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to, are gone through at all Sambandhams among respectable Nâyars, and I would further say that they ought to be gone through at every Sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the Sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of Sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the Putamuri, or Vastradanam, as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of Sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of Sambandham I consider the *Pudamuri* form the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. Of course my description will be borne out by the evidence that is before us. The preliminary ceremony, in every Putamuri, is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf, with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes

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184 agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the
[787] marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's Kâranavan, and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and
[574] the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth; and this preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed at all Putamuris in North Malabar, is called 'Putamuri Kurikkal,' but is unknown in South Malabar.

"Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the Putamuri, the bridegroom visits his Kâra-
[584] navans and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The
[613] bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the
[564] day appointed the bridegroom proceeds, after sunset, to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house by the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends to seats
[438] provided in the tekkini, or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom distributes presents (*danam*) or money gifts to the Brahmans assembled. After this the whole party is treated
[579] to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to
[ ] appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the *padinhatta* or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the house, called padinhatta, in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion. There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and *Ashtamangaliam*, which consists of eight articles symbolical of *mangaliam* or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves of the cocoanut tree, an arrow, a looking glass, a well washed cloth, burning fire, and a small round wooden box called 'cheppu' made in a particular fashion. These will be found placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his groom's-man enters the room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloth and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east with the Ashtamangaliam and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groom's-man then hands over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done, the elderly lady who accompanied the bride, sprinkles rice over

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monial when copied meaninglessly, is surely food for painful reflection.

The ceremony to be described is not one of cake and wine, for the doings of people who have reached that bathos have little interest to the anthropologist, though they may have some to the *observer* of social diversions, but the genuine ceremony as done in orthodox fashion in South Malabar without modern adornment will now be described. My informant says in the first place [582] the man should not enter into Sambandham with a woman until he is 30. Now-a-days, when change is running wild, the man is often much less. In [181 184] North Malabar, which is much more conservative than the south, it was, however, my experience that Sambandham was rare before 27 on the side of the man. And now continue with the Note.* "The Kâra- 585 navan and the women † of his household choose the 564 bride, and communicate their choice to the intending 613 bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and if they [787] agree, the astrologer is sent for and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the Sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and when on the point of leaving they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have Sambandham with—(naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony, the proposal is accepted with pleasure and the party (from the bridegroom's house) returns home."

Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for [574] the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom (for elders never accompany him) are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M. and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the Taravâd),

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* Of which what follows is an abstract.

† My correspondent uses the word "Ladies." I prefer women, a finer word.

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Again the astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day he fixes, two or three of the women go to the house of the girl-wife, the Ammâyi as they call her (literally "uncle's wife"). They are well treated, and presently bring away the girl with them. As she is about to enter the gate house of her husband's Taravâd, the stile of which she crosses right leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a burning lamp and a brass plate (tâlam) and precede her to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated on a mat, and a burning lamp and a nazhi (1 measure) of rice and some plantains are placed before her. One of the younger women [married or not I cannot say] takes up a plantain and puts a piece of it in the Ammâyi's mouth; a little ceremony called Madhuram Tital, or giving the sweets for eating. She lives in her husband's house for [431] a few days and is then sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or cloths, gifts of the senior women of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious.

"In a big Taravâd, where there are many women, the Ammâyi does not, as a rule, disperse sympathy and good will in the household, and if she happens to live temporarily in her husband's house, as is sometimes though very rarely the case in south Malabar, and to be the wife of the Kâranavan, it is observed that she gets, more than her share of whatever good things may be going; hence the proverb 'Ammâyi Ammayê Kallinmel Vechchittu Mattoru Kallu Kondu Nârâyana'—'Place Ammâyi Amma on a stone and grind her with another stone.'" [539]

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Yet one more extract—a reference taken from my notes. The Rev. S. Mateer, author of a well-known book on Travancore, where he resided something over a quarter of a century I think, informed me ten years ago—he was speaking of polyandry amongst the Nâyars of Travancore—that he had "known an instance of 6 brothers keeping 2 women, 4 husbands to one, and 2 to the other. In a case where 2 brothers cohabited with one woman and one was converted to Christianity, the other brother was indignant at the Christian's refusal to live any longer in this condition." I have not known an admitted instance of polyandry amongst the Nâyars of Malabar at the present day, but there is no doubt that if it does not exist now (and I think it does here and there),

it certainly did not long ago. Polyandry exists amongst other castes, as we shall see by and by.

We must now leave the subject of marriage, which, simple though it is, is like most simple things extremely difficult to describe. The marital relation of the Nâyar is a very natural and simple affair; yet it is the *point d'appuis* of that system of inheritance through women which was once much more common than it is now.

Let us hope it will remain unchanged, and that the Nâyar will be able to say always (in his own tongue), with more regard for concrete truth than poetic insight "Das ewig' weibliche ziet uns hinan."

BIRTH: ANTE-NATAL AND AFTER CEREMONIES.

The following very interesting note on the ceremonies connected with birth, those preceding it as well as those following it, has been very kindly given by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nâyar; so I quote his own words:—

"A Nâyar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh month of pregnancy, she (at least, among the well-to-do class) bathes, and worships in the temple, every morning; and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter over which holy *mantrams* have been said by the temple priest or by Nambûtiris. This is generally done till delivery.

"*Puli-kuti.*—Another and even more important ceremony during pregnancy is the *puli-kuti* (lit., drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by the rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day, nay, even the very hour is fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins by the planting of a twig of the *ampasham* tree, on the morning of the day of the ceremony, in the principal courtyard *(natu-muttom)* of the *Taravâd.* At the appointed hour or *muhurtam*, the pregnant woman, after having bathed and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (*vatakini* or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastwards. The *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife,' whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the courtyard and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right-hand ring finger. Holding a

event. On this day, the *Kârnavan* of the family gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk, mixed with sugar and slices of plantain. Then he names the child and calls it in the ear by the name* three times. This is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the expenses of which are necessarily met by the father of the child.

"*Chôrûn or First Meal of Rice.*—As is usual with the Nâyar every event is introduced by a ceremonial. The first meal of rice partaken by the child forms no exception to the rule. It must be remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some time after birth; the practice being to give it flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery. There is a particular variety of plantain, known as *kunnan*, used for this purpose. The staple food of the Malayali, rice, is given the child, for the first time, generally during the sixth month, and is attended, of course, with some ceremonial. Necessarily, the astrologer fixes the day; and at the auspicious hour, the child, bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the duty of the father to provide) is brought and laid on a plank. A plantain-leaf is spread in front of it and a lighted brass lamp, placed near. On the leaf are† served a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind, salt, chillies, and sugar. Then the *Kâranavan* or the father, ceremoniously approaches and sits down facing the child. First, he puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind, chillies and salt; then some rice; and lastly a little sugar.

"Thenceforward, the ordinary food of the child is rice. It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially for the '*bandhus*,' such as the *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife') to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other ornaments. The *chôrûnû* or rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed in some famous temple, that at Guruvâyûr being a favourite one for this purpose.

"*Child-birth—Position during.*—When a Nâyar woman is about to be delivered of a child, she is placed in a reclining position on a low wooden couch (Kottotam), her back supported by a companion, generally an old woman. The kottotam is very like, if not identical with,

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* In some places, the child is named only in the sixth month on the chôrûn day.

† In some places, all the curries, etc., prepared for the attendant feast are also served.

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and deification of ancestors, worship of snakes and kites, ceremonies connected therewith, sacrifice, magic, witchcraft and sorcery—together with the purest form of Vêdic Brâhmanism known in Southern India, of which there is the highest expression in the temples attached to the wealthy Nambûtiri Illams, to which the Nâyar goes daily to pray, to purify his mind after having purified his body by bathing. There is very little to be seen of prayer in Southern India outside Malabar. The great mass of the people (I exclude the Brâhmans, a very minute percentage of the whole) never dream of going to a temple daily to pray; in fact prayer for its own sake scarcely exists. People go in crowds to a temple on the occasion of a festival to make obeisance to the god, and in a vague way to pray, or they will go to fulfil a vow; but going merely to pray by way of self purification of spirit is certainly rare, for this denotes a phase of religion to which the great mass of the people of Southern India has not reached.

Far away in, as it may be said, rural Malabar, I witnessed the ceremony in which the Velichchappâd exhibited his quality. It was in the courtyard of a Nâyar house, to which thronged all the neighbours (Nâyars), men and pretty women, boys and girls. The ceremony lasts about an hour. The Nâyar said it was the custom in his family to have it done once a year, but could give no account of how the custom had originated: most probably in a vow; some ancestor having vowed that if such or such benefit be received, he will for ever after have an annual performance of this ceremony in his house. It involved some expenditure, as the Velichchappâd had to be paid, and the neighbours had to be fed. Somewhere about the middle of the little courtyard, always as clean as a dinner table, the Velichchappâd placed a lamp (of the Malabar pattern) having a lighted wick, a kalasam, which he had prepared, some flowers, camphor, saffron and other paraphernalia. Bhagavati was the deity invoked, and the business involved offering flowers, and waving a lighted wick around the kalasam. The Velichchappâd's movements became quicker, and suddenly seizing the sword he ran round the courtyard (*against* the sun, as the sailors say) shouting wildly. He is under the influence of the deity who has been induced into him, and he gives oracular utterance to the deity's commands. What he said I know not, and no one else seemed to know or care in the least, much interested though they were in the

787 performance. As he ran, every now and then he cut his
796 forehead with the strange misshapen sword, pressing it
[785] against the skin and sawing (vertically) up and down. The blood streamed all over his face. Presently he became wilder and wilder, and whizzed round the lamp, bending forward towards the kalasam. Evidently some deity, some spirit, was present here, and spoke through the mouth of the Velichchappâd. This, I think, undoubtedly represents the belief of all who were present. When he had done whizzing round the kalasam, he soon became a normal being and stood before my camera.
[465] The fee for this self-inflicted laceration is one rupee and some odds and ends of rice, etc. I saw the Velich-
791 chappâd about three days afterwards going to perform
796 elsewhere. The wound on his forehead had healed! The careful observer can always identify a Velichchappâd by the triangular-like patch over the forehead where the hair will not grow, and where the skin is somewhat indurated. The Velichchappâds seem to get used to cutting their foreheads as the eels to skinning.

We shall find the oracle again when we come to the lower races. I have seen a fine demonstration of it amongst the Paniyans of Wynâd when engaged in a regular corrobboree. An extremely interesting example of this combination of this phase of the lower Dravidian cult which is in no way Hindu, with the Brâhmanic religion, is to be seen at Mailâr in the Bellary district. There the oracle is bound up with a story about Rishis and Asuras, an incarnation of Siva and Pârvati, and many thousands assemble yearly to hear the oracle delivered by a man on the top of a huge affair representing Siva's bow, speaking the words of the god.

769 Before concluding the subject of religion, allusion
782 must be made to the worship of ancestors. Cremation of the dead, as in the case of the Nambûtiris, is done in the garden or compound surrounding the Taravâd house, in the south or south-west corner of it; so the Nâyar has the ashes and spirits of his ancestors with him always. We have seen already how that pacification of the spirits of those who have passed from view, and who are in the land of the shades, pervade the lives of the living. They are worshipped every new moon day, but especially on the new moon of Karkitakam,* of Tulâm and of Kumbham

[113] * The names of the Malayali months have been given already—see Nambûtiris (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 2).

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this ceremony. Thus having purged their bodies of all worldliness they are taken into the ceremony and are seated as described before. Now by means of the *mantrams* and poojah the serpent gods are propitiated and in consequence they manifest themselves in the bodies of these female representatives of theirs. The entrance of the gods into their bodies is characterised by a fearful concussion of their whole frame, gradually developing into a ceaseless, shaking, particularly the upper parts. A few minutes afterwards, they begin to speak one by one and their speeches are regarded as expressions of the god's will. Sometimes the gods appear in the bodies of all these females and sometimes only in those of a select few or none at all. The refusal of the gods to enter into such persons is symbolical of some want of cleanliness and purity in them; which contingency is looked upon as a source of anxiety to the individual. It may also suggest the displeasure of these gods towards the family in respect of which the ceremony is performed. In either case, such refusal on the part of the gods is an index of their ill-will or dissatisfaction. In cases where the gods refuse to appear in any one of those seated for the purpose, the ceremony is prolonged until the gods are so properly propitiated as to constrain them to manifest themselves. Then after the lapse of the number of days fixed for the ceremony and after the will of the serpent gods is duly expressed the ceremonies close.

"One other small item of offering to these gods consists in certain ballads sung by the Pulluvar females going about from house to house at stated seasons of the year. They take a pretty large pitcher, close its opening by means of a small circular piece of thin leather which is fastened on to the vessel by means of strings strongly tied round its neck. Another string is adjusted to the leather cover which when played on by means of the fingers, produces a hoarse note which is said to please the god's ears, pacify their anger and lull them into sleep. This vessel is carried from house to house in the day time by these Pulluvar females; and placing the vessel in a particular position on the ground, and sitting in a particular fashion in relation to the vessel, they play on the string which then produces a very pleasing musical note. Then they sing ballads to the accompaniment of these notes. After continuing this for sometime they stop, and getting their customary dues from the family, go their own way. It is believed that these notes and the ballads are peculiarly pleasing to the serpent gods, who bless those for whose sakes the music has been rendered. In consequence of the halo of sanctity that has been popularly thrown round the serpent it is considered a sin of a most heinous nature to kill one of these deified reptiles. The killing of a cobra is regarded with the utmost concern amongst us. In such case the carcase is taken and duly burned with all

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ASTROLOGY, MAGIC,* WITCHCRAFT.

Astrology.—The ordinary astrologer of Malabar is a man of the Kanisan or Panikkar† caste, a community relatively low in the social scale, therefore carrying pollution to those of the higher caste. A curious position in society for people of a learned profession to occupy. The Panikkar is also, very often, the school-master. He is in request in connection with every social function, religious or other, and of course, at every birth. His astrology, he will tell you, is divided into three parts:

(1) Ganita, which treats of the constellations;
(2) Samkita, which explains the origin of the constellations, comets, falling stars, earthquakes;
(3) Hôra, by which the fate of man is explained.

The Panikkar, who follows in the foot-steps of his forefathers, should have a thorough knowledge of astrology and of mathematics, and be learned in the Vêdas. He should be sound in mind and body, truthful and patient. He should look well after his family, and he should worship regularly the nine planets:—Sûryan—the Sun; Chandran—Moon; Chovva—Mars; Bûdhan—Mercury; Vyâzham, or Guru, or Brihaspati—Jupiter; Sukran, or Sani—Venus; Râhu and Kêtu. The two last, though not visible, are, oddly enough, classed as planets by the Panikkar. They are said to be two parts of an Âsura who was cut in two by Vishnu.

I here reproduce a diagram made for me by a Panikkar showing the relative positions of the planets on the 7th of April 1895:

Sûryan, Bûdhan.	Sukkran.	Chovva.	Brihaspati.
Râhu.			
			Kêtu.
		Sani.	Chandran.

N.B.—Chandran remains 2½ days in each of the 12 *rasis* or celestial chambers.

* What was said under "Magic and sorcery" when describing Nambûtiri Brahmans, Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I, applies also to the Nâyar.

† This is not to be confounded with the honorific Panikkar affixed to the name of a Nâyar.

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are truly difficult. Members of the brotherhood are bound to secrecy by solemn oaths, and the secrets of their craft are not allowed lightly to pass to any outsider. A member of the brotherhood may have one or more disciples or apprentices who are in the first place bound to strict obedience. These apprentices fill vacancies in the brotherhood.

He who would be a member of the Ôḍi cult falls at the feet of him whom he would have as master, and begs for initiation into the mysteries. The master tries to dissuade him, but the would-be Ôḍiyan persists; and then, when assent is given, comes the trial. He follows his master to a lonely place by night. The master disappears in mist, and then re-appears as some terrible beast, now standing still, now rushing furiously towards the novice as if to tear him in pieces. If he stands still and unperturbed the novice is considered to have fulfilled *that* test. He is then required to pass the night alone in the forest, which he is made to believe is peopled with strange beings howling horribly. When he has satisfied the master that he is not afraid, he is subjected to other tests, and he is eventually accepted as a novice. He is introduced formally to the brotherhood on a certain selected day, when, having invited them to a feast, pûja is made to the dread spirit worshipped by them—Nîli of Kallaḍikôd or Kallaḍikôd Nîli, as she is called (Kallaḍikôd is the *place* name), through whose aid the Ôḍiyan works his devilment. Flesh and liquor are consumed, and the novice is taught how to procure the magical *Pilla thilum* (infant oil).

The principal ingredient to be used in preparing this is a fœtus of some 6 or 7 months' growth. The Ôḍiyan fixes his eye on some woman, who may be of any caste other than his own, in her first pregnancy. Then, on a selected day, usually a Friday, he proceeds to her house at midnight, provided, that is, he meets with no inauspicious omen on the way. I am not sure what omens are auspicious or the contrary; but at any rate the Ôḍiyan returns home should he meet with an omen which is unfavourable, and starts out again some other night. Transforming himself into a dog, a bullock, a cat or some other quadruped, he walks thrice round the house, shaking vigorously a cocoanut-shell containing *gurusi*, a compound of turmeric water, lime and other substances, the colour of which is red. The woman whose appearance is desired comes out. She cannot help herself. If locked in she bangs her head against the wall, and yells

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much the same part as did its maternal and affinal kinsmen to a patrilineal lineage in the lower castes. Individual *enangar* were moreover often of course affines (*bandhu*) to members of the lineage. But among Nayars, the marriage-tie was so slender that individual affinal bonds were not, it seems, strong enough to unite the lineage to the rest of the sub-caste group. This was achieved instead by a hereditary relationship between lineages as groups, which persisted irrespective of the making and breaking of marriage ties between them.

In these retainer sub-caste groups the *tāli* must be tied by an *enangan*. Each girl had a separate bridegroom, usually a youth who might have already formed *sambandham* relationships of his own. The *tāli*-tiers were chosen at a local assembly. The choice was made by the village astrologer, who compared the horoscopes of the girls with those of suitable young men and fixed the auspicious date and time for the ceremony to take place.

In Kiriyattil, Samantan, and royal lineages, whose women frequently or invariably married men of higher sub-caste, the *tāli*-tier was chosen from the appropriate higher sub-caste. Women of village headmen's lineages were commonly 'tied' by men of their district headman's lineage, and Sāmantan women and Cochin princesses by Nambūdiri Brahmans. Calicut princesses had the *tāli* tied by men of Kodungalur, one of the ancient ruling lineages which had been conquered by Calicut. Similarly, Walluvanād princesses had the *tāli* tied by men of the lineage of Beypore, a more ancient and therefore higher-ranking lineage than their own of an adjacent small kingdom which was also feudatory to Calicut. In these sub-castes the 'bridegroom' was usually an elderly man.

The account which follows was given by Sūdra Nayars of Pālakkara, the Cochin village where I worked. In Pālakkara, the *tāli*-rite in its full form has not been performed for twenty-two years, and, like many of the traditional rites of Nayars, it is doubtful if it will ever be performed again. This description refers to this most recently held ceremony, at which the *tālis* were tied for nineteen girls, ranging in age from two to twelve, of a lineage comprising twelve property-groups.

The ceremony required the co-operation of the whole village, which at that time was coterminous with the *tara*. It was held in the lineage's oldest ancestral house. A shed of bamboo and palm-fronds was erected before the house, the first corner-post, of areca-palm wood, being planted ceremonially by the carpenter. A man of the temple-servant caste of Kurups drew a picture of the Malabar goddess Bhagavadi on the floor of the shed, of the type drawn in the village Bhagavadi temple at festivals to the goddess. Nayar men of the village then went and cut down a branch of the milk-exuding tree of Bhagavadi from near the village temple. This they planted near the corner-post in the floor of the shed, in order, informants said, 'to bring Bhagavadi to the *taravād* and set up a temple in the house'. A plank of wood of the same tree was set in the shed for each girl to sit on in turn.

All *enangar* of the lineage, and representatives of every other Nayar house in the village, attended the four days of ceremonies. On the first morning, the girls went in procession to the shrine of the lineage's *dharma devi* (goddess of moral law). This goddess, represented by a stone image, is the lineage's private Bhagavadi. She is propitiated annually with cooked food to ward off sickness and misfortune. Similar offerings were made now, and the procession returned. Young men of the lineage then went to meet the bridegrooms, who arrived on elephants with their male age-mates, accompanied by music. At the gate married women of the lineage met them carrying brass plates each containing a lit wick, paddy, rice, and a spray of coconut flowers. The bridegrooms' feet were washed by brothers of the girls and they were seated in the marriage-shed. Near the picture of Bhagavadi were laid paddy and rice, coconut flowers, the sacred brass lamp of the household, and a tray of eight auspicious objects (*ashtamangalyam*). These included a woman's loin-cloth, a rouge-box, a bell-metal mirror, an arrow, a coconut-spray, rice, paddy and a lit wick; they figure also in the Nambūdiri

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marriage rite. At the auspicious time, each girl was led in turn by her brother from the house and seated on the plank. At a sign from the astrologer, the Brahman priest (called Elayad, a low sub-caste of Nambûdiris who officiate at Nayar funerals) handed the *tâli* to the bridegroom, who tied it round the girl's neck. The nineteen couples were then secluded in the house for the remaining three days and nights of the rites. Informants said that in modern times when lineages were often large, the couples numerous and the girls sometimes infants, cohabitation would be unlikely. It was not, however, forbidden, and appears formerly to have been required. It is clear that the rite was ritually if not actually a defloration ceremony, as is indicated by the saying *Tâli kettiu amma âyi* ('having had the *tâli* tied, a girl becomes a [married] woman').

Next morning the party reassembled without the couples, and offerings to Bhagavadi took place. The participants were a Sûdra Nayar oracle (*velichchappâd*), a Vattekad (oil-monger) Nayar sacrificial priest, and a Nayar boy who accompanied the oracle, carrying a staff to the top of which was tied a brush of coconut flowers. These officiants perform similarly by hereditary right at the annual Bhagavadi temple festival. The priest offered rice, paddy, coconuts, incense, a burning lamp, and toddy before the branch of the milk-tree, following which he sacrificed a cock and poured out a vessel of red blood-like liquid. The oracle then donned a waist-band and anklets of bells and took a sickle in his hand. (These symbolize the power of Bhagavadi: when he dons them it is believed that she enters and possesses the oracle.) Accompanied by loud music, he leapt wildly in the air, shouting hoarsely and chopping his forehead with the sickle till blood flowed down. In this frenzy he called out to the host *kâranavan* that the goddess was appeased by his offerings. His possession then subsided and his insignia were removed.

Bhagavadi is the Malabar goddess of war, smallpox, and the soil. Her idol, in the Nayar village temple, is a hollow cylindrical stone, a symbol of the vagina, as the Brahmanical idol of Siva is the lingam, a symbol of the phallus. Bhagavadi is also worshipped as the oracle's sickle, as a picture drawn in chalks on the floor, as the milk-tree (*Alstonia scholaris*), and as the ancestral sword of a Nayar lineage. She is believed to have protected the Nayars in war. She is fierce and vengeful, her chief power being to inflict smallpox. She is propitiated by similar rites during smallpox epidemics, on the sixteenth day after a smallpox death, and on the last night of her annual temple festival, during which she is angry with the villagers who must observe sexual continence.

The remainder of the second day, and the third day, were devoted to feasting and music. On the fourth morning each couple went to the village bathing pool where, hand-in-hand, they took a purifying plunge-bath. Then, decked in fine clothes, they returned to the lineage house. In the kitchen each couple ate a meal from the same loaf. The company was then fed, but on this day, alone of all days, women ate before men. The bridegrooms received clothing and foodstuffs from the *kâranavan* and departed for their respective homes.

In Pâlakkara the *tâli*-tier might remain with his bride as her first *sambandham* lover. At the last *tâli*-rite two of the nineteen bridegrooms remained in association with their brides, though one abandoned his shortly afterwards. The other seventeen girls formed unions with other men of the village shortly after puberty. In all *tâli*-rites in this area, however, the 'bridegroom' remained the ritual husband of his 'bride' throughout his life, though he need never visit her again. At his death, the 'wife', together with her children by whatever physiological father, must observe fifteen days' pollution. Death pollution was otherwise traditionally observed only for matrilineal kin: not until recently was it observed for the *sambandham* lover and the physiological father. The *tâli*-tier of a woman was regarded, moreover, as the ritual father of her children. If they knew him, the children called this man *appan* (the Tamil word for 'father', used for the *genitor* by Tiyyars and Christians) as distinct from *acchan* (originally

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588 coconut in half, returned amid music, and entered the middle room. The barber woman dressed her and threw rice on her head.

[604] The girl's mother's brother's wife then carried a plank of the milk tree into the marriage [782] shed, walked round with it three times, and placed it on a mat over rice and paddy. The Tandan of the local group must be present to witness the rites. The mother's brother's wife and other women, or in some areas the *kāranavan*, led out the girl who, with her face hidden by a cloth, walked three times round and sat on the plank. The barber man instructed her to perform an offering of rice and water to the household lamp and the post supporting the south-east corner of the shed, which had previously been set up by the carpenter with ceremonies at an auspicious time. The girl threw more rice to the cardinal points, the earth, and the sky. Gold and silver coins, salt, rice, paddy, turmeric, charcoal, and pieces of old cadjan leaf from the house-thatch were then tied separately in leaves and placed in a mud pot. The mouth of [789] the pot was covered with a leaf and tied with string. The girl sprinkled rice over the pot, broke a hole in the lid, and picked out one of the articles, which was examined as an augur of her destiny and of the number of children she would bear. She then twisted off a coconut from a bunch hanging at the corner of the shed. Each of her relatives threw a new cloth over her head. Half of the cloths were given to the barber, who at this point uncovered the girl's face and head and poured coconut water from a leaf of the pipal tree on to a silver and a copper coin which he had placed upon her head. Her *kāranavan* asked the astrologer if the auspicious time had arrived, after which the barber woman handed the *tāli* to the mother's brother's wife who tied it round the girl's neck. The barber woman poured water on the girl's hands: this she threw upwards three times and once each to the cardinal points. A lit cotton wick, steeped in oil, was twisted round a rod of bamboo stuck in a young coconut. The girl was required to look at the sun and at this wick. She then walked three times round a coconut tree in the garden, pouring water at its root. This concluded the ceremonies. Unfortunately, I have no record of whether the girl was further secluded after the rites were over.

[604] Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909–12, I, p. 288) reports that the *tāli* was tied 'either by the [582] maternal or paternal aunt or by the would-be mother-in-law, if the husband for her has already been selected'. All of these kinswomen (mother's brother's wife, father's sister and husband's mother) are real or potential mothers-in-law because of cross-cousin marriage. My own informants and also Aiyappan state that the rite included an initiation into cookery: the girl was made to grind condiments on a grindstone and to pretend to cook milk porridge before the *tāli* was tied. Aiyappan reports that the barber woman instructed her, and at the end said: 'Prepare sweet porridge, give it to father and mother, and to me, and keep what remains in the *uri*' (a rope support to keep vessels suspended).

This initiation rite, while, like the Nayar one, symbolizing the girl's attainment of maturity and her passage to the status of a married woman, is adapted to the occupation and kinship of Tiyyars. It is significant that to attain 'wifehood' a Tiyyar girl must grind condiments and make porridge – a foreshadowing of her domestic duties as wife.

588 The mother's brother's wife and the father's sister are preferred mothers-in-law for a
582 Tiyyar girl. The fact that either could be replaced by the actual prospective mother-in-law if the girl were already betrothed proves that they acted in the rite as potential mothers-in-law. The mother's brother's wife is of course suited to become a girl's mother-in-law in a matrilineal system which recognizes strong paternal claims (see Fortes 1953, p. 200). Marriage of her son to her husband's niece mitigates the proverbial conflict between cross-cousins, while cementing the relationship between father and son who frequently live together and co-operate in cultivation. The father's sister's claim is equally strong. In this marriage the boy
58 commonly returns to his mother's brother in his natal house, the girl remaining in her paternal
605 house where she has been brought up. The matrilineal cross-cousin marriage of a man is
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presence of *maṅgar*. The young children of a divorced woman might return with her to her brother's house, but had the right to go back before puberty to their fathers' house.

In this system the husbands obtain both sexual and procreative rights in their wife, her children becoming members of their patrilineal group. The wife herself does not, however, as among Brahmans, become wholly incorporated as a member of her husband's lineage. A sonless widow whose husband left no brothers had no rights to property or maintenance by his family; she must return to her brother's house. She could not, as among Brahmans, adopt on behalf of her husband or temporarily manage his property in the absence of adult kinsmen. Though her children belong to the husband's group, the wife appears as in North Malabar to be only temporarily 'leased' by the husbands, on payments of the *kāṇam* sum, for her sexual and domestic services.

Moreover, though a woman cannot inherit property in her natal *taravāḍ*, the bond between brother and sister remains strong. The eldest brother is early regarded as the guardian of his sisters, who observe partial avoidance and respect to him much as in a Nayar *taravāḍ*. It is significant that at divorce, a woman is returned to her brother, not to her father or the headman of her patrilineal group. At the death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe pollution in their own dwelling-group, assembling at the deceased's conjugal house on the sixteenth day for final rites to the spirit. At the death of a man, his sisters' sons have pollution, assemble at his house, and in the sixteen days of mourning perform offerings to the spirit immediately after the deceased's sons, and before his younger brothers and paternal grandchildren. At the death of a man, his sisters and daughters make offerings to an image of the deceased on the fourteenth day, but the widow herself (unlike the Brahman widow) takes no part in death rites. This shows the strong tie persisting between a married woman and her natal group, and the comparative lack of integration into the group of the women who marry its men. The former existence of exogamous matrilineal clans underlines this persistence of the bond between women and their natal kinsfolk, especially their brothers.[1]

The Tiyyar Tāli-*Rite*. A girl's *tāli* was tied before puberty by a boy, usually a small child, of some local *taravāḍ*, affinal or unrelated, into which the girl might marry. My informants in Cochin and Walluvanāḍ could not remember the details of the rite, which has died out in the last twenty years. They knew that it must be done before puberty, and that the *tāli*-tier sometimes married the girl after puberty by the usual ceremonies.

According to Thurston & Rangachari (1909, VII, pp. 80–1), who describe the rite in Chavakkad, between Calicut and Cochin, Anantha Krishna Iyer (1909–12, I, pp. 285–7) who describes it for Cochin, and Aiyappan (1944, pp. 159–60) for the whole central area, the horoscopes were compared as for a marriage. The artisans provided an arrow and a brass mirror which the girl carried in her hand, a plank of the milk-tree, the rouge-bottle which figures in the eight auspicious objects, and a staff carried by the bridegroom. The local *Pāṇan* (a low caste of sorcerers and menial workers) brought a peacock-feather umbrella for the girl and a 'war umbrella' for the boy. A week in advance, the carpenter planted the south-east corner-post of the shed at an auspicious moment. For three days before the rites, the girl was secluded as if she had menstruated. On the day before the rites, she was taken to worship the sun, and was seated in the marriage-hall on a plank with a lit lamp, a vessel of water, rice, plantain-fruits, and a coconut before her. Her mother's brother's wife parted her hair and placed a gold coin on her crown, and the Tandan's wife (like the barber in North Malabar) anointed this three times with oil, here poured from a leaf of the *jak* tree. The girl took a ceremonial bath and was secluded in the house with a casket, a bell-metal mirror, and a sword on a stool beside her.

[1] The tie between sisters is also close. They and their children observe pollution for each others' deaths, and the sororate (forbidden among Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars) sometimes confirms the status of the mother's sister as a proxy mother.

This partial avoidance between a woman and her older natal kinsmen begins after the *tāli*-rite, when she receives the title *amma* (lit. 'mother'). In the rite, it seems, the girl is fictitiously made mature by the mock menstrual seclusion – before she is in danger of actually becoming mature; her sexuality is then given away by her natal kinsmen to a vicarious husband outside her lineage. For this is the one right in her forbidden to her natal kinsmen; the rest – her domestic services and procreative power – remain theirs throughout her life. Even among North Malabar Nayars and Tiyyars, with their virilocal residence, the brother may call home his sister and her children and require her to divorce her husband. He must, moreover, maintain her if she is divorced, and her children have the right to return to the mother's brother's house as his heirs.

The unconscious desire for adelphic incest in these matrilineal castes appears in other rites. I have mentioned the rites performed by the brother of a girl at her first menstruation among South Malabar Nayars and North Malabar Tiyyars. Later, when the South Malabar Nayar woman was in the fifth or seventh month of her pregnancy, she was formerly seated before her brother who poured tamarind juice into her mouth from the point of the *taravād*'s ancestral sword. It was believed that he thus conveyed strength (*sakthi*, a generalized form of energy believed to reside *par excellence* in semen) and also martial valour, into the body of the first-born child. This seems a clear instance of the brother's unconscious wish to impregnate his sister himself, as well as an explicit recognition that, in matriliny, the mother's brother has the rights of a *pater* in the child.

Among South Malabar Tiyyars the tamarind-juice is given by the pregnant woman's brother to her husband, and by the husband's sister to his wife. This rite is more in keeping with a patrilineal system in which the husband has primary procreative rights in his wife. At the same time, it seems likely that the rite reflects the brother's unconscious desire to pass his 'strength' to his sister and her child, through the husband, and the sister's desire to contribute to the making of the child, and thus usurp the role of her brother's wife. The rite is beautifully in keeping with double unilineal descent, in which brothers and sisters retain strong interest and rights in each others' offspring.

The unconscious fear, and underlying it, an unconscious desire, of women for sexual attack from a male parental figure (the father in this case) probably appears also in the South Malabar Tiyyar rites which precede the tamarind-drinking. These are to drive out evil spirits who may attack the child in the womb. The woman sits at night before a group of washermen (Mannans) who invoke the spirit in song, and perform devil-dancing in weird masks. By morning, the more susceptible of the women present, overcome by the spirit, may go into fits. Finally a live cock is held against the woman's forehead, and rice thrown over her head. If she has a fit, the cock is beheaded and its blood offered to the evil spirit. The rites are paid for by the woman's father. In view of what is known of the beliefs concerning incubi in western societies (Jones 1931, ch. 3), it seems probable that these rites issue from the unconscious female fear of being attacked sexually by the father, and the recognition of the father's unconscious desire to kill the child in his daughter's womb. The Mannan devil-dancers (who sometimes consciously impersonate the dead ancestors of a propitiating Tiyyar lineage) may be interpreted to represent the woman's lineage forbears and thus, collectively, her father.[1]

Again, in all the groups studied the *taravād* is believed to be guarded by a group of snake-

[1] This interpretation is practically certain in view of the almost identical ceremony carried out one year after the death of a South Malabar Tiyyar. It is believed that before this the spirit is earth-bound and cannot be invoked to pass to heaven. On the night fixed, small girls of the *taravād* sit before Mannan and Panan devil-dancers who, as in the pregnancy ceremonies, wear weird masks and sing to invoke the spirit. Late at night one of the girls may become possessed by it and talk like the deceased, and give commands to the family about its future conduct. After this ceremony the spirit is freed from its bonds to the earth (see Thurston and Rangachari 1909, VII, p. 91). Since the possession of the girls by an ancestral spirit here is of the same kind as in the pregnancy rites and both types of spirit are called *pradhan*, there seems little doubt that the evil spirit who attacks is also ancestral and thus an *ātmar*.

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613 Again in all the groups studied the
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564 tarawād is believed to be guarded by a group of snake-
182 gods (*nāgas*) who reside in the small grove in the south-east corner of the ancestral gardens.
184 If they are offended, the snakes inflict the *tarawād* with barrenness among women, disease, and
782 child-deaths. They are propitiated by the low caste of Pulluvar. A Pulluvar and his wife
787 come to the Nayar or Tiyyar grove and draw figures of the serpents in green, red, yellow, and black. They sing songs of entreaty to the snakes, and play on a musical instrument, while one or more women of the propitiating *tarawād*, who have observed sexual continence and food taboos for several days previously, dance round the figures with hair streaming. The snakes then 'enter the bodies' of these women, who behave in a dissociated manner and speak with the voice of the possessing snake-spirit, announcing to *tarawād* members the kind of propitiation necessary to overcome their wrath. Since they are the guardians of the *tarawād*, are jealous of the marital sexuality of women born into it, can inflict them with barrenness, and periodically 'enter into' them, it seems likely that these totemic snakes are unconsciously regarded as phallic symbols of the *tarawād*'s male forbears (whether matrilineal or patrilineal). Their 'possession' of the women would thus reflect the incestuous desires of women towards men of the parental generation in the *tarawād*, and secondarily towards their brothers.

593 I have discussed in general terms the probable existence of unconscious incestuous
182 desires between the individual and members of the parental generation and, as an extension of this, between siblings. We must now face the problem of whether, in the matrilineal castes, a regular Oedipus complex exists: that is, of whether a man unconsciously wishes to kill his father and appropriate his mother, and whether a girl harbours murderous wishes towards her mother and incestuous ones towards her father.[1]

There seems little doubt that in the matrilineal as in the patrilineal castes, a 'normal' Oedipus complex must develop in early infancy. Even among South Malabar Nayars the physiological function of the male in procreation is clearly acknowledged, and a child is expected to resemble its father as well as its matrilineal kin. The Nayar infant must, moreover, be aware of the marital relationship between its parents, since it commonly sleeps in the
593 mother's room until the age of about four or until the next sibling is born. At about the age of
604 five to six, however, a change takes place in the relationship between a South Malabar Nayar
182 child and its parental generation, and thus, we may suppose, in its unconscious attitudes to these figures. A boy now comes under the discipline of his mother's brothers, and a relationship of reverence with underlying hostility begins to be formed. A girl becomes aware that her mother's brothers are her ultimate guardians and, though she may still approach them freely, she must submit to them. The father drops into the background. In a traditional household, whereas he might play with them freely as babies, he may not now interfere in the upbringing of his children. Even today, he may be already divorced and replaced by another husband: in Palakkara sixteen out of seventy Nayar sibling groups containing children under
[578] the age of fifteen had no contact with the *genitor* or his kin. The mother's brother thus takes over a great part of the role of *pater*. The relationship admits, however, greater conscious hostility than does the patrilineal father-child relationship. Despite the reverence demanded in public, Nayar men sometimes remark privately that they harbour murderous feeling towards their *kāranavan*: several have in fact killed him. Such conscious hostility to the father would be almost unheard of in a high patrilineal caste. The partial avoidance required between a man and his sister's son, and the extreme formality of their behaviour, reflect this underlying hostility. The relationship with the elder brother is, in etiquette, modelled on that

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[1] My data, as far as Malabar matriliny is concerned, contradict Malinowski's (1916) theory that the Oedipus complex is absent from the start in matrilineal societies and is replaced by the wish to marry the sister and kill the maternal uncle. They confirm Ernest Jones's (1924) conclusion that a normal Oedipus complex exists in matrilineal as in patrilineal societies, but that in matriliny repressed incestuous desire for the mother is extended to an unusual degree to the sister, and much unconscious hostility to the father deflected towards the mother's brother. Roheim's (1950, ch. 3) refutation of Malinowski's view and his analysis of the Oedipus complex of Normanby Island are also relevant.

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rank, above the political system of the kingdom, and, in religious belief, the representatives of God on earth. All of these father-figures are collectively physiological fathers of the Nayars, so that in summoning them to deflower their women the Nayars call in real or classificatory fathers as well. When the bridegroom is a higher caste man, moreover (as when Tiyyar barbers call an elder of their caste), his venerable age leaves no doubt of his paternal role.

That the ritual bridegroom should be a father-figure to the community explains my informants' memory that the Asan might deflower Nayar women, but might prefer to forgo his right for money paid by some other bridegroom. It explains why the *desavari* must be present to give permission for the Nayar rite (and the Tandan for the Tiyyar rite) and receive money 'as if to recompense him'. The preliminary gifts by the high-caste Nayar girl's family to Nambūdiri landlords, the *nāḍuvari* and the Maharaja also bear out this hypothesis.

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Among South Malabar retainer-Nayars and among Tiyyars a high-caste father-surrogate could not be obtained, so that 'they must perforce supply the priest's place themselves'. The retainer-Nayars get round this by selecting an *enangan* to represent the whole caste, who was deputed for the task by village elders and, supernaturally, by the position of the stars at his birth. Even so, the hazardous nature of the rite is indicated by the need to perform it at an auspicious time, when the astrologer (in some respects another father-figure since, though of lower caste, he was traditionally the trainer of Nayar boys in their village gymnasium, and a priest of Bhagavadi) gave the word.

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Among North Malabar Tiyyars the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister might tie the *tāli*. She does this on behalf of her son, who is the proper husband for the girl, and before the marriage-pole and the sacred household lamp (divine phallic symbols). In this caste it is fitting that some kinsman or kinswoman of the bridegroom should perform the rite, because Tiyyars are not polyandrous and a girl becomes temporarily incorporated at marriage into her husband's dwelling group. Yet, if we assume the Oedipal fear, the Tiyyar bridegroom could not tie the *tāli* himself, since he is (ideally and often) a cross-cousin. If he is the mother's brother's son, he takes the girl, in this group where paternal claims offset matrilineal, from her *kāranavan* and his own father, a terrifying situation in view of his unconscious Oedipal fears. If he is the father's nephew, he takes her from her father and his own *kāranavan*, an equally dangerous situation. The problem is surmounted by permitting the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister of the girl to 'marry' her on behalf of her son.

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The substitution of the barber-woman to tie the *tāli*, and the role of the barber as one intimately associated with the girl's passage to womanhood, may perhaps be understood by considering the general role of barbers in Tiyyar social life. The barbers cut hair for Tiyyars, and in South Malabar though not commonly in the north, their women are midwives. They rank parallel to the Tiyyar washerman with whom they are compared, since both castes have polluting occupations but take part in the rites of birth, girls' puberty, and death. In North Malabar Tiyyar men may marry barber women hypergamously, their children being barbers by matrilineal descent. Barbers are thus socially and sometimes physiologically the 'sons' of Tiyyars. They are also likened by the Tiyyars to their younger brothers. Barbers may not give food to Tiyyars but must attend Tiyyar feasts, when they sit on the left or 'younger' side of the feasting hall, the Tiyyars sitting on the right or 'older' side. Barbers address Tiyyar men as 'elder brother', but Tiyyars address older barber men by name, as they do juniors of their own caste. Despite his low rank, however, the barber is in some situations a paternal figure for Tiyyars. He assists the Tandan in his executive functions and may summon Tiyyar offenders to caste justice. An elderly barber is often a marriage-broker for Tiyyars, but he is primarily a priest for Tiyyar household rites. At a Tiyyar death he instructs the heirs to make offerings to the spirit, in the form of a mud image which he makes. On the fourteenth day, he purifies the household by anointing its members with oil

[693] [584] [793] [782] [783]

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to grow up. There is one important custom (and Mr. Ananta Krishna Aiyer forgets to notice it)[1] which forbids two generations of girls being married together. When girls become mothers at sixteen, generations mingle frequently and often there may be girls younger than oneself who are one's mother's sisters and, therefore, stand logically in the same position as one's mother. The custom is that they should not undergo the ceremony together, though this is strictly kept up only in richer families.

The first step to this ceremony is a village and *enangar* council. The prominent people of the village and the *enangars* are invited and the *Kārnavan* takes counsel with them as to the various arrangements with regard to the ceremony. After the *Kaniyan*, or the medicine man (who is also the astrologer and magician), has fixed the auspicious hour for the ceremony, a *pandal*, or a decorated tent, is put up in the presence of the village elders, in the *Muttam*. In the middle of the tent so erected is kept the *Astamangalyam* (Sanskrit word *Asta*=8, *mangalyam*=happiness giving). The *Astamangalyam* consists of a measure of paddy, some rice, an absolutely white cloth (to show purity), an arrow (to show the warlike character), lighted lamp (uninterrupted prosperity), a looking-glass, and a *cheppu* (which is the Malabar equivalent of a powder puff), and a blossom of the coco-nut palm.

The ceremony of *Talikettu* can take place any time of the day, only it must be an auspicious hour. Evening is preferred because more gaiety is possible. Early in the morning the girls are taken to the family tanks by the women of the *Enangar* house, and have an oil bath. After this they are elaborately dressed. They put on various ornaments used only for that day. All the families, of course, do not possess these ornaments; generally, only one or two families in the village have them, but they are available for all on such occasions.

The tier of the *Tali*, who is generally a priest, or sometimes a Kshatriya lord, is invited, and he stops at a house near by. The day before the ceremony he goes, accompanied by the village elders on an elephant, in a procession to the nearest temple and gets the *Tali* consecrated by the priest of the temple. In these days I have seen the *Tali*-tier taken in a motor car to the temple, though the slow-moving elephant is more impressive.

At the auspicious hour the bridegroom, in a warrior's dress (with sword, etc.), arrives at the house, accompanied by a party of the villagers. He is welcomed by the male members of the family, and taken to a seat of honour. There the brother (own or collateral) of the girls washes his feet (this is a custom of extreme politeness prevalent among the Hindus). Then the brides are brought into the *pandal*. They make a *pradikshana* (go round the *pandal* by their left three or seven times). The eldest girl's father's sister's son (*i.e.*, her marriageable cousin) gives some brand-new pieces of fine silk cloth, and then the priest or the warrior ties the *Tali* round the girls' necks. This is followed by a huge feast which goes on for four days. On

[1] *Cochin Tribes and Castes*, vol. ii, chapter on the Nāyars.

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the last fifty years. All the evidence that we have of this custom among the Nāyars in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, are from foreign travellers who, it must be remembered, were not allowed to come within sixty yards of a Nāyar house. Their evidence, therefore, is an extremely unsatisfactory ground for dogmatising on Nāyar customs. On the other hand, the extensive Malayalam literature of that period contains no single allusion to polyandry. The works of Kunchan Nambiar, whom it is no exaggeration whatever to compare to Molière, though he describes minutely the social life of the Nāyars of the early eighteenth century with its laxity of morals, redeemed only by chivalry of conduct, makes no mention whatever of polyandry. On the other hand, in a famous passage he makes the declaration: "It is against the laws of all castes for a woman to have four or five husbands."

Nalanchu barthavoru thikku thanatu
Nalu jatikkum Viddhichatallorkanam.

How far this statement is decisive it is difficult to say. But one thing seems to be clear from it, that the idea in itself was repugnant to the community as a whole, though individuals might have practised it here and there.[1]

V.—Birth and Funeral Ceremonies.

Among the Nāyars, as among all the people whose life is regulated by magico-religious customs, child-birth is an event of great and mysterious significance. Especially is this the case with regard to the first child. Therefore the ceremonies of nativity are of an intenser and more magical character during the time of the first pregnancy than during subsequent ones. Indeed, the mysterious nature of childbearing is entirely lost after the first time, and the ceremonies on subsequent occasions are only a few tabus, which are generally, in the phraseology of Van Genepp, "rites dynamistes directs et negatives."

The most important of the pre-natal ceremonies is *Pulicudi*,[2] or the drinking of the tamarind juice; and the customs relating it are as follows: On the appointed day all the *enangars* (people belonging to the same kingship organization) come to the house early in the morning, and the pregnant woman is taken out by one of them and bathed, after rubbing oil all over her. Then she is dressed for the occasion and, entering the house from the north, sits looking eastward. The astrologer, who being of a lower caste commonly stands in the outer courtyard, calculates the auspicious hour. He sends word when the time is come, and the *Ammāri* (the wife of the mother's brother, and mother-in-law by right of the brother) pours a few drops of tamarind juice in a small silver bowl. The brother or the uncle of the

[1] See Note 3, Appendix.

[2] Dr. Rivers makes some obviously erroneous deductions based upon this word, for which see note on "The Similarities between Nāyars and the Todas," Appendix, Note 2.

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pregnant woman, taking a sword, generally kept for this purpose, and holding it in the left hand points it to her mouth. The juice is then poured on it in such a way as to fall by drops into her open mouth. After this, one of the women of the *enangar* group smears the body and head of the pregnant woman with coco-nut oil and takes her to the tank. She is also required to choose one from a collection of different grains, and it is believed you can say from the choice what the sex of the child is going to be.

The significance of the ceremony seems to be twofold. First, it is the official notification to the allied families as well as to the local village groups of the fact that a woman is lawfully pregnant in the house. The intervention of the *Ammāri* or the mother's brother's wife is supposed to show that everything is as it ought to be. It is, therefore, in the first place merely a social announcement. Secondly, the actual ceremony with the sword is supposed to have the effect of making the child a warrior, and it is believed to impart the virtues of bravery, manliness and honest dealing. It is, therefore, in the classification of Van Genepp, a rite direct, sympathetic, automatic and positive. The tamarind juice is believed to create sensitiveness and honour. It is a "contagionist" rite. Whenever a man shows cowardice, the question that is asked as a mark of contempt is: "Were you not born after *Pulicudi?*" or "did not your mother drink the tamarand juice?"

After the *Pulicudi* there are many prohibitions which a pregnant woman has to respect. Of this the most important is the absolute sexual tabu which dates from the *Pulicudi* to forty days after the childbirth. Other tabus are mainly connected with food and are mostly "contagionist" positively or negatively. Thus the woman is not supposed to take very warm food, as it might scorch the head of the child; she is not supposed to eat much hot food (chilis, pepper, etc.), because it might put out the eyes of the child. There are no definite rules about these, but every mother in her desire to do the child no possible harm keeps herself away from all doubtful matter.

After the birth of the child there is a mild pollution (as compared to the strong untouchable pollution caused by death) in the family. This pollution does not carry any disabilities except the prohibition to enter any sacred precincts. On the fifteenth day there is a purificatory ceremony, but there are no festivities or celebrations connected with it.

The mother and the child are accommodated in a special room which no man may enter. Unmarried girls, unless they are little children, are also not allowed to go near. The child, of course, can be seen by all after the cutting and burying of the umbilical cord. It is handed round to the father and other interested relations. No kind of food except the mother's milk is given to it, and, if the mother died at the birth of the child, it is generally given the milk of some relations or even of outsiders who have children of almost the same age. The person whose milk the child thus drinks, though she be an outsider, is considered equal to its own mother, and her children are considered the same as own brothers. There is a story of a Nāyar

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853 846 608 king who as a child lost his mother and was therefore fed on the milk of an attendant woman, refusing to punish her son after repeated acts of treason on the ground that an ocean of milk flowed between them which a drop of blood would pollute for ever.

852 301 789 On the twenty-eighth day the child undergoes two ceremonies. The first is called *Erupathettu Kettuka*, or the "Tying of the twenty-eighth day." Before that day the child is not allowed to wear any ornaments. On the twenty-eighth day a silver or gold belt, or a mere cord with an ornament in the shape of a heart or a laurel leaf at the front, is tied to the waist of the child. The laurel leaf was most certainly meant as a charm in ancient days, while now it is nothing more than an ornament. The waist-belt occasionally has attached to it amulets made sacred by the repetition of *mantrams* or magical formulæ over it. Such amulets are worn for the purpose of preventing disease and keeping the child safe from the demons and other evil spirits.[1]

553 787 After this comes the name-giving ceremony. The astrologer announces the star under which the child is born and presents the horoscope. Then he mentions the initial letters of the names. Each star has generally two or three letters, and the whole of Sanskrit and Malayalam can be drawn upon for the names of deities beginning with those letters. The choice is really very wide, even with the most difficult initial letters.

852 402 431 [824] The child is not supposed to be carried out of its mother's family till the sixth month. Then, on an auspicious day it is taken to the father's house (if the father is a Nāyar) by the mother, with some tokens of respect to the father's sister. These presents generally are tobacco leaves (always a mark of respect among the Nāyars), betel, etc. The father's family generally gives a certain sum of money for the expenses of the coming ceremony.

852 262 [123] [613] These proceedings are preliminary to the ceremony of *Choru Koda*, or the giving of rice. For the first six months the child is given only the cooked flour of dried plantain fruits. Rice, which is the chief food of the Nāyars, is strictly prohibited before the *Choru Koda*. As a boy of fourteen or fifteen, I have many times officiated in this ceremony, on one occasion as a member of the father's family and on others as a member of the maternal *Tharawad*. What is done is that the child is taken to the temple by its mother, accompanied by some women of the *Enangu* group, together with a male representative from the father's house (if the father is a Nāyar) and one from the mother's own family. There is an offering to the god of the temple in the form of rice cooked with milk and sugar, and all the party, after purifying

[782] [783]

[241] [114] [1] The question of origins is very difficult, yet we cannot pass without noticing the idea that the loin cords are the beginnings of dress. Professor Wilhelm Wundt, in his well-known book on *The Elements of Folk Psychology*, has shown conclusively that it has no reference to the development of clothing, but is entirely magical in its purpose (pp. 86–87). The prevalent custom among the Nāyars supports this view. The custom can be understood only in relation to the general beliefs about cord-magic and the efficacy of amulets attached to waistbands.

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spirits can be seen. At night their mouth is full of fire of different colours, but it throws out no rays. That it throws out no rays is important because therein is supposed to lie the distinction between an ordinary light and the fire in the mouth of a spirit.

The *Prētam* is supposed to hover round its burial place or the place of its accident. Everyone is warned off such a place at night time. The hours during which these *Prētams* appear are between 9 in the evening and 3 in the morning. It must be noticed here that the *Prētam* of a "black-magician," as distinct from a social magician like the *Kāniyān*, has more power to do mischief: it has more "*orenda*," so to say. The man who practises black magic invariably dies a violent death, and his *Prētam* hovers round the scene of his former activities.

"Man dreads above everything else," says S. Reinach,[1] "illness and death, punishments inflicted by the angry spirits with which his imagination peoples this world." This is absolutely true with regard to the Nāyars. Disease is generally believed either to be the outcome of offending a god or due to the magic performance of interested relations. Preventive sacrifice is very common, and every year all respectable Nāyar families perform some sort of propitiation ceremonies in the village temple. If a whole village is ravaged by some epidemic, the villagers inquire into the matter through the astrologer, and if he finds, as he usually does, that it is due to the wrath of the village god or goddess, ceremonies of various kinds are at once undertaken and goats are offered as sacrifice, and sometimes a *Desavalathu*, a procession of the people with images, around the village is performed.

But such occurrences are rare. Only epidemics are put down to the wrath of offended gods. Other diseases as well as misfortunes are put down to the influence of *Prētams*, bribed into action by jealous or covetous relatives. When any great misfortune, such as a succession of deaths, happens in a family, the first thing that is done is to consult the astrologer, who is sure that a ghost is working it under the influence of magic. His prescription is, of course, counter-magic, to be performed by himself. An offence to a god can easily be rectified if one does some elementary sacrifices, but the performance of counter-magic is neither so inexpensive nor so easy. First of all one has to get rid of the evil already done. For that elaborate ceremonies may be necessary. Secondly, ceremonies to keep one immune from future attacks are essential. If it is any woman who is possessed of the devil, and it is women who generally suffer from these things, an expensive and elaborate devil dance called *Kolam Thullal* has to be performed. For this the village has to be informed, and each family in the village is supposed to contribute something in kind to the expenses and take its share in the work. The ceremony is as follows:—

Preparations for the dance must begin a good many days beforehand. The *Kāniyān* of the village with twelve others of his people come to the house where the

[1] *Cults*, p. 37.

776 high above his reach unless, of course, there is something near by on which he could climb. He cannot untie a knot, as he does not possess fingers, though he can open the strongest lock. What rich people do to keep their money out of his reach is to tie a knot on the purse and keep it locked in a safe, the latter precaution being necessary against human hands that possess fingers.

776 791 773 *Kutti Chattan* can, of course, be tamed by magicians and bribed to do whatever his patrons like. There is a story that a Brahmin landlord who was also a magician tamed a *Kutti Chattan* and used him for the purpose of keeping a watch on his things. A Christian tenant of his who had gone to pay the rent, not knowing the existence of the invisible and mysterious detective, stole certain things and took them home with him. But lo! *Kutti Chattan* had followed him, and the man was found dead next morning, and the stolen things were in their place. Such is the power of *Kutti Chattan*, the household elf of Malabar.

771 Whether the practices here narrated and the belief in the existence of a "naughty elf" amount to religion depends very much upon the definition we give to it. Though they are distinctly social and possess social sanction, I do not think it can be called religion, because there is a fundamental difference in the emotional and psychic aspects of religious experience and practice, and such social beliefs and customs as I have described here.

754 771 [178] [789] But side by side with this there also exists "black magic," sinister, selfish, and anti-social. It is fast disappearing, more as a result of economic pressure than because of any growing disbelief in it. A young man has no time now to devote himself entirely to sacrificing goats and birds all night and chanting formulæ so that he might become possessed of magical power. Those young men who have devoted themselves to such practices are, however, looked upon with great fear. The community does not like such practices, and though these magicians may excite fear, they are also aware of the general belief that they will some day come to a disastrous end.

Their practices are carried on in secret and nobody knows what they do except those initiated. Their assistance is procured only by people who want to do harm to others or satisfy ignoble desires. A man often gets the help of a magician of this sort to perform his "art" so that an enemy of his who is gone on a pilgrimage may not return. They are avoided by all decent people, and society in general, though it fears their "art," considers them charlatans.

754 There are many minor superstitions that can be only briefly noticed here.

784 123 [755] *The Evil Eye.*—The magical effect of the evil eye is a matter of very serious concern among Nāyar women. I remember being taken to task for telling a woman how healthy her boy looked, and must add that I felt as if I had been convicted of a heinous crime when four or five days later I was told that the child was ill. The entire feminine opinion of the village was convinced that the child was suffering from my evil eye, and a good many *mantrams*, or magical formulæ, were said over it before the child was well again.

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Habitations.

The Nayars, like other Malayali Hindus, are not lovers of towns, but generally live in detached houses, with large compounds and good gardens. The strict customs of caste purity and impurity in former times made them desert places where they were liable to be polluted by the members of very low castes. They generally select the site of a house either on the margin of a fertile valley or ravine with bright green fields of rice in front. The entrance to their compounds, which are often somewhat raised off the ground by laterite or mud walls, is at some little distance from the main house, and consists of a door in the centre of a strong gate-way, which is the first that attracts one's attention as the dwelling is approached. The gate is quaintly constructed, and the surroundings are exceptionally neat and tidy. It is also essential that a stair or a ladder should lead up to it from the bank of a green level paddy flat, reminding one of the days when security of life and property depended upon one's own ability to laugh a seige to scorn; when a Nayar house was his castle, and when at the gate-way were posted retainers to keep watch and ward against enemies. Seats for them to rest on, right and left, both outside and inside, a solid quaintly carved door and lintel, a room above approached by a ladder from inside, with windows, or openings whence shots were discharged on lawless intruders, and finally a thatched roof, complete the characterstics of a gate house. Permission to build such a gate house was a rare privilege and had to be obtained from the rulers, but with a change in the old order of things, this restriction has, like many others of the kind, ceased to exist. The plan and other details of the structure of a Nayar house are determined in strict conformity with the principles of the ancient Hindu science of architecture based on astrology. [1] A compound or garden is first selected and measured out into a square plot and is then divided into four parts by imaginary lines running lengthwise and breadthwise through the centre or middle of it. Either the north-east or south-west portion is chosen for the site of a house, the former being preferred to the latter. The south-east corner is generally set apart as the family burial-ground. There are again special spots selected for the well, tank, cow-shed, serpent grove and the family deity. The selection of the site for the house is

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partly guided by the influence of the monsoon. In regard to the serpent grove or religious shrine, a square plot just in the middle of the south-west portion is considered the most auspicious. A typical Nayar house is quadrangular, with an open space *(mittam)* in the centre; the western portion of it is the granary, while the rest of it is partitioned into rooms. The northern portion comprises the store-room and the kitchen at the western and the eastern extremities, with the dining room in the middle, while the western and eastern portions are kept as open halls for gatherings on important occasions. The house so constructed must face the rising sun—the east—and yet rather inconsistently it is called the *patinjattupura* or the western roof or building. The reason of this is that the *patinjattu muri*—the central chamber or the honoured guest chamber in the house, sanctuary of the ancestors of its occupants—must be so placed as to admit of entrance through its doorway the sun's earliest rays. Behind one or more of the rooms above mentioned is a *chaippu* forming a kind of enclosed verandah room. Another type most commonly met with consists of a portico serving as a reception-hall, the other portions of the building corresponding in details, more or less, with the quadrangular edifice just described. The rigid adherence to the science of architecture is confined not only to the Nayars and other high caste-men, but also to the generality of the Native Christians and Mahomedans who, before construction, always consult some expert in the choice of a proper site and the formation of a ground plan of the house. Misfortunes or even calamities are often attributed to the violation of these principles, and very often a newly built house is either altered to remedy the defects or even pulled down. There are again houses, where the two types are combined. The huts of the poor classes consist generally of one or two small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms with a kitchen at one end, and a verandah either in front or on all sides of the main building. With the increase of population, and with the demand for more houses, the old notions and *sastraic* injunctions are being overlooked as a matter of necessity, and the old fashioned houses are displaced by those erected on sound sanitary principles. The wood-work of the buildings is solid and substantial, and is in some cases beautifully carved. The walls are generally of laterite, brick or mud, and roofs which till

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CHAPTER II.

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THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

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A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

582 According to Nayar ideas the most desirable bride for a young man is the daughter of his maternal uncle.

588 585 Marriage customs. There are two forms of marriage in vogue among the Nayars, namely, the *Thâlikettu kalyânam* (*tâli* tying ceremony), and the *Sambandham* (the customary nuptial union of man and woman), the first of which is performed for every girl before puberty, and the second, the real adult marriage, is celebrated after she comes of age. The *tâli* tying for every girl is compulsory before she arrives at maturity, [1] and the omission or neglect of it [688] will place her and her family under a ban; for, it is considered [182] a religious impurity for a girl to attain puberty before the performance of this ceremony. There is however a tendency for these restrictions to be overlooked now-a-days.

588 In every *taravâd* or family, the ceremony is performed once in ten or twelve years, and all the girls down to the baby in the cradle, who have not already undergone this ceremony, are married in this fashion for the sake of economy. When, in a family, the *tâli* tying ceremony has to be performed for a girl or a number of girls, the *kâranavan* or senior member thereof, at a meeting of the friends and relatives of [787] the family, sends for the local astrologer, who after examining the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls determines the auspicious hour for it as well as for certain subsidiary rites

[784] 1. As a rule, the tali tying ceremony is performed before the girl attains puberty, but sometimes it is performed afterwards. In the latter case, the girl is prohibited from entering temples during the period intervening between the attainment of puberty and the tali tying ceremony.

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which precede or follow it.[1] Information is then given to the relatives, and friends of the family regarding the performance of the ceremony on a certain date, when invitations are sent around to those that should attend the wedding. The ceremony then opens with a fixing of the post [2] for the erection of a pandal, which is tastefully decorated and in which the ceremony is performed. The male members of the village are invited and treated to a feast followed by the distribution of betel leaf, arecanuts and tobacco for chewing.[3] In the Cochin State, every time the ceremony is performed in a privileged family, or in one wishing to obtain privileges, a member thereof visits His Highness the Raja with presents (*thirumulkázhcha*), and requests his permission for the celebration. Similar presents are also made to the Nambuthiri *jenmies* by their tenants and others attached to the *illams*. It is interesting to note that certain privileges, such as sitting on grass mats, having a procession with an elephant, beating of drums, firing of pop-guns, worshipping of the Sun on a platform especially constructed, have often to be obtained from the ruler of the State.[4] Then follows the *Ashtamangalyam Vekkal* (procession to the marriage pandal to place the eight auspicious things, namely rice, paddy, tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking glass, a well washed cloth, lighted fire, and a small wooden box called cheppu) which is a formal beginning of the ceremony, or if necessary, earlier still, and for which a *Brâhmani* is invited. On the night previous to the ceremony, the girl neatly dressed and adorned in her best is taken by her caste-women to a reserved spot in the house (*Patinmûttu Iruttal*, seating on the western side), where some ceremonies are gone through, and the *Brâhmani* or *Pushpini* entertains the party with her songs, chiefly *Puránic*. Soon after, the girl and the female members of the family, dressed in gay attire and decked with costly ornaments, come out in procession to the pandal where the

1. The village astrologer is entitled to be formally invited. He makes certain predictions at the sight of the messenger about the results of the marriage. When he arrives at the gate of the house, he is formally received, and he makes certain other predictions from the movement of the flame of a lamp as to the result, happy or otherwise, of the marriage. In the latter case, he suggests some remedies.
2. For this also an auspicious hour is fixed by the astrologer.
3. A few important members sit together and prepare a kind of list for the purchase of provisions for the feast and other expenses.
4. Such privileges are permanently enjoyed by certain aristocratic families. Some obtain them on marriage occasions.

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588 same formality is again gone through. The girl has to sit
[778] with her face veiled. After going round the pandal, three, five or seven times, a cutting of the jasmine placed in a brass vessel is carried by the Elayad or family priest, who, mounted on an elephant with it, and accompanied by a grand procession with the beating of drums, a display of fire-works, and the joyous shouts of men and women, goes to the nearest Bhagavathi or other temple, where the plant and the *tâli* (marriage badge) placed in a vessel are consecrated by the performance of a *puja* by the temple priest. The party then return home with it. The night previous to the ceremony is
[574] marked by a feast called *Atházham*. Next day, the girl who is again properly dressed and well adorned, is led to the reserved spot or the central chamber in which are placed a lighted brass lamp and a vessel full of rice. A short time before the auspicious hour, she goes round the pandal or shed three times, and is led on by the *Brâhmani* to the worship of the Sun (*Adithyane Thozheekal*). In some cases this is done on the bare ground, and in others in a shed provided with a ceiling of plank previously erected for the occasion. After this the girl is seated in front of the shed and somewhat on its western side. The bridegroom or the *tâli* tier, who may be a Thirumulpâd in the case of several girls, is invited and lodged in a house near the bride's family, where he and his friends are treated to a feast called *Ayal* or *Ayini Oonu*. A short time before the auspicious hour, the bridegroom, armed with a sword and neatly dressed, starts in procession with his party to the bride's house, where, at the gate, he is received by a few male members with *ashtamangalyam* in their hands and seated conspicuously in the pandal. In some cases, there is a grand procession from the bride's house to meet the bridegroom's party. A male member of the family, either the maternal uncle or the brother of the bride, washes his feet, and brings the girl, who is already gaily dressed and bedecked with ornaments,
[431] into the pandal, round which she goes three times. She is then
[326] seated on his left side, and the girl's father makes presents of cloths (*manthrakodi*) in which bride and bridegroom dress
[787] themselves, and after the usual distribution of gifts to Brahmans and the Elayad, the latter hands over the *tâli* made by the village goldsmith, at the lucky moment mentioned

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by the Kaniyán or local astrologer, to the bridegroom who with the sword on his lap ties it round the neck of the girl. She is then required to hold an arrow and a looking glass. When several girls have to undergo the ceremony, a single Thirumulpád performs it or as many Thirumulpads as there are girls. The Thirumulpad gets one to eight rupees for each girl. As soon as the *táli* tying is over, certain formalities indicative of the wife's duties (giving the bridegroom betel to chew, giving him a vessel of water to wash his feet and some fruits to eat, etc.), are gone through, and after this, the *táli* tier is allowed to depart receiving his fee for the service rendered by him. The account given above is that of the ceremony performed in the aristocratic families of the State. Among the Nayars in the northern parts of the State as well as in other places, the Kaniyan or the village astrologer examines the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls and those of the boys of the families of their *enangans*, selects the boy or boys fit to tie the *táli* and determines the auspicious hour, when information is also given to the *káranavan* of the boy's families regarding the proposal and a formal request to them to allow the boys to serve as bridegrooms. In the event of their willingness, preparation for the ceremony begins at once. The rites and the order in which they are performed differ in different places, and in different subdivisions of the same caste, but the general characteristics are the same throughout. In well-to-do families there is a *táli* tier for each girl, while in others, a young man is invited to tie the conjugal collar for one girl, and for others, the mother does it. The beating of drums, firing of pop-guns, the procession with elephant, and the worship of the Sun by the girl on a raised platform are all dispensed with. The other formalities except the *Bráhmani's* song in some places are the same as those described above. Added to the jollity of the occasion are the vociferous and joyous shouting of the parties of men arranged for the purpose, as also a peculiar sound produced by the women assembled there.

The married couple are taken inside the house, and the ceremony is practically over. The *Karayinmél Asán*, the headman of the village, plays an important part in the ceremony. In a conspicuous part of the pandal he is provided with a seat on a cot, on which are spread, a grass mat, a black blanket and

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she bathes with her friends. The same party return home in procession, when the *Brâhmani* entertains the party with her music. In the afternoon, the girl is seated in a pandal put up in front of the house, where the Vélans continue the songs, which are *Puranic*, and the assembled guests who are chiefly the women of the village as also those of their friends and relatives present the washerman, each with a piece of cloth. They are entertained at a sumptuous feast held that day; after which the assembled party break up, taking leave of the host. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house on the fourth day for the bath; whence she returns to her house in procession together with the beating of drum and joyous shouts. In the northern parts of the State, the Vélan's songs are at night, and the performance of the ceremony is compulsory on the fourth day, In the southern Taluks it is often put off to a convenient day, before the completion of which, the girl is prohibited from entering into the kitchen or going to the temple for worship.

Sambandham.

The second or real marriage is the *Sambandham* (the customary union of man and woman), which is the principal word denoting the conjugal relations among the Nayars. It is said that there are seven forms of this marriage prevailing in Malabar, of which only two or three are in vogue in the State. The customs connected with each of the latter differ in different places: nevertheless the main features are the same all over. The best form of *Sambandham* among the Nayars is that between the daughter of a maternal uncle and his nephew; but, as a rule they enjoy very much greater freedom of choice than other classes of people. The parents or friends of the bride or bridegroom make the proposal, and the wishes of the *kâranavans* of the two families are invariably consulted after the examination and agreement of their horoscopes. If the parties agree, an auspicious day is fixed in consultation with the astrologer. A few of the caste-men of the village and the friends of the bridegroom meet together in his house, and they all go in a sort of procession to the bride's house where they are properly welcomed and seated in a conspicuous part of the house. A portion of the *Râmâyanam* or other sacred book, referring to marriage and the happy conjugal life attending it, is then read by the Asân or village school master. Some music is also provided for the entertainment of the assembled guests who

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will also be found on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this *sambandham* ceremony all over Keralam, are, in the main, the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether the stars agree astrologically, the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony, the usual hours at which the ceremony takes place, the presentation of the *dánam* (gifts) to the Brahmans, the sumptuous banquet, the meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are the features which will invariably be found in all well conducted *sambandhams* in all parts of Kéralam alike. But here I would beg to state, that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to are gone through at all *sambandhams* among respectable Nayars, and I would further say, that they ought to be gone through at every *sambandham*, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of *sambandham*, with the particular incident attached to certain forms of *sambandham* in South Malabar. I shall describe the *Pudamuri* or *Vastraddnam* as celebrated in North Malabar, and show how the other forms of *sambandham* are related to it. I consider the *Pudamuri* form the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. The preliminary ceremony in every *Pudamuri* is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride in the presence of the relations of the bride and the bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down the results of his calculation on a piece of palmyra leaf with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's *kúranavan* and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth, and this preliminary ceremony is invariably performed

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184 at all *Pudamuris* in North Malabar. It is called *Pudamuri*
[787] *Kodukkal* (giving pieces of cloth for dressing), and it is unknown in South Malabar.

Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the *Pudamuri*, the bridegroom visits his *kárana-vans* and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nut, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset, to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house of the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends, to seats
[431] provided in the *tekkini* or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom distributes presents (*dánams*) or money gifts to the Brahmans assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now the time for the
[787] astrologer to appear and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the *patinjáttu* or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the house in which all religious and other important household ceremonies are usually performed. This room will be decorated and turned into a bed room for the occasion.
[354] There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps and *ashtamangalyam* which consists of eight articles symbolical of *mangalyam* or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves of cocoanut trees, an arrow, a looking-glass, a well-washed cloth, lighted fire and a small round wooden box called a *cheppu* made in a peculiar fashion. They will be found placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom enters it. The bridegroom with his best man enters the room through the western door accompanied by the bride's aunt or some other elderly lady of her family. The bride stands facing east with the *ashtamangalyam* and lits up lamps, and the head and shoulders of the bride and bridegroom are touched, and the bridegroom immediately leaves the room, as he has to
[431] perform another duty. At the *tekkini* or southern hall, he now presents his elders and friends with cakes and betel leaves and

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are allowed greater freedom in the choice as well as in the divorce of husbands (*sambandhakárans*), and the females in the family do not interfere in their freedom so long as it does not produce any domestic scandal. The orthodox view is that, as the woman is not independent, she seldom thinks of relinquishing the husband. Arbitrary divorce is thus discouraged, and adultery is a grave social offence. A wife, who is disputatious, who steals her husband's property, who favours another than her husband, who converses with strangers, who is gluttonous, who enters strange houses, should be put away even though she may have born ten sons. Litigation between two families and disagreement between a husband and wife are also the causes. Social stigma follows the adulterer, and the adulteress loses her status in society.

A Nayar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during her first pregnancy. First during and after the seventh month of pregnancy, she bathes and worships the deity in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter, over which holy *mantrams* have been recited by the temple priest or by Nambuthiris. This is done generally till delivery. *Pulikudi* (tamarind juice drinking) is an indispensable ceremony performed for every pregnant woman, by the rich and poor alike, on an auspicious day, in the ninth month of pregnancy. An auspicious day, nay, even the very hour, is fixed by the astrologer. The ceremony opens by the planting of a twig of the *ambázha* tree (Spondias mangifera) on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the inner court-yard (*nadumittam*) or the northern wing of the house. At the appointed hour (*muhúrtam*), the pregnant woman, after having been bathed and properly attired, is conducted to the northern block of the house (*vatikkini*) where she is seated facing eastwards. The *Ammáyi* or the uncle's wife, whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the court-yard, and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, or uncle, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right hand ring-finger. Holding a country knife (*pisánkatti*) in his left hand, with its point towards the north, he pours the tamarind juice over his knife with his right hand three times

Pulikudi.

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843 The juice dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks [602] it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, she is asked [824] to pick one grain out of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet is supposed to [574] declare the sex of the child in her womb. The whole ceremony is wound up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and [78] friends of the family. The *enangan's* wife at the time pours oil over the head of the pregnant woman. If the oil flows on the left side, it predicts the birth of a female; if on the right side, a male.

844 When a Nayar woman is about to become a mother, she is placed in a reclining position on a low wooden couch (*kattódom*), her back supported by a companion, generally an old woman. The *kattódom* is very like, if not identical with, the couch on which the Nayar woman has her oil bath. The surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat. Lying on her back, the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling by [564] way of support. The child is received by a woman of the barber caste, who generally officiates as midwife, and in some places this duty is performed by a woman of the Vélan caste.

Childbirth.

846 Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and on every day, the mother wears cloths, washed and presented her by *Vannáthi* (a woman of the washerman caste). On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Athikurussi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil, and the five products of the cow (*panchagavyam*) with gingelly seeds. Then the woman dips herself in a tank or river or sits on the ground near the bank, and a maid servant pours on her head the water from a vessel as many as [184] twenty-one times. This practice is not universal, though it certainly obtains in the State and in some parts of South Malabar and Travancore.

846 852 It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new born baby has also to undergo some rite of purification. The baby is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it

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and dancing. This nightly routine of *pujas*, offerings, dancing etc., is thus continued for the prescribed number of days.

On the morning following the last day, the votaries purify themselves by a bath and fetch branches of *pala* trees, and a dancing procession is organised, which wends its way through the Nayar streets, accompanied by the Goddess manifested through her *Velichapad*, to the temple of the Goddess, and from there disperse to their respective houses before evening after singing songs of praise and thanks-giving in honour of the Goddess. A pit, 15 feet long, 5 feet broad and 3 feet deep, is then made and filled with ten to fifteen cart-loads of fuel which is burned and reduced to glowing red hot charcoal. Here also is performed a *puja*. At about 4 A. M., the *Velichapad* through whom the Goddess manifests herself, the priests, the votaries, and lastly the caste-men, all walk over the fire several times.

The day dawns and the senior member of the Porayattu family sitting on the stool consecrated to Bhagavati, and covering his head with the silk cloth of the deity, propitiates her with offerings of fruits, cocoanuts, and fowls. The whole ceremony is thus brought to an end. The object of this propitiation is to protect people from the attacks of cholera, small-pox, and other epidemics.

Agricultural ceremonies.

Before closing this part of the subject, it may be noted that the agricultural year begins with the *Vishu* (first of Medam, about the middle of April) at which the hot weather is supposed to terminate. In families where the members pursue agriculture as a profession, they send for the local *Kaniyan* (astrologer), who estimates by astronomical calculations the agricultural prospects and the probable quantity of rain during the ensuing year. He is also asked to choose an auspicious day for ploughing, and on that day the master of the house goes to the seed-store with his Pulayan slaves and takes out a small quantity of each variety of seed, which he puts in a cup made of the leaves of the *kanniram* (nux vomica); he then places the cups in a basket near a lamp in the yard and places a small heap of rice around or near it. A new ploughshare fastened to a plough, and a pair of oxen are also brought, and these are painted with rice water. They are then taken in procession to the field, on reaching which the

[i.e., The Goddess Bhagavati -- Analyst]

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Pulayan head-man raises a mound of earth on which are thrown a little manure and a handful of seed. He then yokes the cattle to the plough and turns a square plot of ground, taking care to have furrows made in it, and the plough dropped on the right. Ganapati is then propitiated with offerings, and the master throws the seed in the furrow, when the Pulaya head-man invokes the blessings of the gods and the deceased ancestors on the seeds that have been sown broadcast, on the cattle that are let loose, and also on the members of the family, and prays them for a good crop, much sunshine, and a good harvest. A cocoanut is then cut on the ploughshare, and if the hind portion is larger than the front one, it predicts an excellent harvest. If the nut is cut into two equal portions, the harvest will be moderate; if the cut passes through the eyes of the nut or if no water is left in the cut portions, misfortune is foreboded. The portions of the cocoanut are then picked up with the milk inside them and a leaf of the *tulsi* plant (Ocymum sanctum) is dropped into each; if the leaf turns to the right, a prosperous harvest is assured; if to the left, the contrary. The ceremonial concludes with loud shouts and invocations to the gods of husbandry; and the unused seeds are distributed among the workmen.

Nira:—The bringing in of the first fruits (*Nira*) is celebrated at the end of Karkadagam (August), previous to which the doors and windows of the houses are cleansed with the leaves of a tree called *paragam* (Ficus hispida) and decorated with rice flour, while the walls are white-washed, and the yard smeared with cow-dung. On the gates of the houses are placed various kinds of flowers together with their leaves and branches, *viz*:—*athi* (Ficus racemosa), *ithi* (Ficus venosa), *arayil* (Ficus religiosa), *peral* (Ficus Indica), *illi* (young bamboo leaves), *nelli* (Phyllanthus Emblica), *jack* (artocarpus integrifolia), and *mango* (manganefera indica). On the morning of the ceremonial day, the priest of the temple comes out preceded by a Marar blowing a conch-shell, when a bunch of the ears of paddy already placed by the Pulayans outside the outer wall of the temple is taken by him to the temple with the same Marar blowing the conch. Every house-holder then sends out to the fields a man duly purified by a bath and smeared with ashes to gather some rice. As he brings it to

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773 778 825 [776] thereon. The early colonists, on a second venture, finding the land occupied, commenced a war against the Nágas, but Parasurama acting as arbitrator, decided in favour of the early colonists, and ordered that they should set apart a corner of every compound as an abode of the serpent gods. He further ordained that these allotted places were to remain virgin-ground, untouched by the blade of the knife or the prong of the fork, while the under-wood and the creepers were to be allowed to grow in wild profusion, and to such the name *kávu* (grove) was given. In it are generally planted several 778 771 825 stone idols of serpents placed on a stone-basement called *chitrakúdam*, the whole being held sacred and reserved by a low wall round it to prevent cattle or children straying into [782] that space. The propitiation of serpents is deemed essential [753] to the prosperity and well-being of every house-holder, and periodical offerings are made to them, while the neglect of [776] these is considered to cause leprosy, sterility, or ophthalmia, among the members of the family. These serpents are therefore regarded as tutelary deities of the family, and the gods along with the shrines are conveyed with the property and frequently specified in deeds of transfer.

793 795 778 825 [782] The high priest of the serpent cult is the Pámbu Mékkát Nambuthiri, who lives in a house full of cobras which are said to be harmless to his family. Whenever an image of a serpent from a grove has to be removed from one place to another, he is sent for on the belief that he alone can do it after due propitiation and offerings, and any tree that is cut down for this removal must be sent to the local temple to be used as fuel. [564] [841] [783] The serpent grove should not be polluted by a member of the low caste, or by a woman during her menses; and when it is so polluted or otherwise spoiled, a member of the family of the Nambuthiri priest has to be informed. He gazes into a [787] vessel filled with oil, points out the evil and suggests the remedy. 771 778 825 [841] [782] [532] The ninth asterism in every month is specially selected for snake worship in Nayar families, when offerings of milk and water are made to them. It is said that the approach of a woman during her menses will cause serpents to vacate the grove because of the impurity, and Pulluvans are required to sing songs and perform certain ceremonies to cause them to re-enter the shrines. Images of these serpents are sometimes

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made even of gold or silver and consecrated for worship in 778
Brahman houses. They are also presented to Brahmans by 825
those on whose date of birth an eclipse falls, and this is done [532]
to mitigate the wrath of Ráhu.

Cases of snake bite are of frequent occurrence in the 755
northern parts of the State where snakes abound; and nowhere 759
else is the Hindu treatment so skillfully practised as to effect
a radical cure by medicines and incantations. When informa- [787]
tion regarding snake bite isconveyed to a physician, or a bitten
man is taken to him, the latter can, by the chirping of a lizard
or other tokens, make out the nature of the case and also
whether it is curable or not. It is said that physicians should 755
not go to a patient's house, and the following story is given in 759
explanation :— 773

Once when the emperor Parikshit was ordained to be bitten by the great serpent Takshaka, the latter set out in the disguise of a Brahman. On his way he met another Brahman, who, on enquiry, turned out to be a physician on his way to cure the king. With a view to test his ability, Takshaka bit a tree which was at once reduced to ashes, but the physician removed the poison, and the tree regained its former state. Takshaka, admiring his ability, loaded him with immense wealth and dissuaded him from going to the king. He also made him promise that he should never volunteer his services in such matters unless patients were taken to him. In some [428]
families the profession is hereditary, the most prominent among them beingt be families of Kokkára Nambuthiri and Máliyakal Karta.

In every village are to be found guardian deities that pro- 776
tect the villagers from the malevolence of
demons which are supposed to occupy an in- [778]
termediate place between gods and men. The temples of the Nayars in which are enshrined these village deities or *Gráma-dévatas* are far less imposing than those of the Brahmans and are callad *kávus*. The deities commonly represented are the consort of Siva or some manifestation of that female divinity, and Ayyappan or Sasta; and these are supposed to keep in subjection the demons and spirits which are ever prone to do harm to the people of the village. Thus, though the demons are objects [782]
of worship, the propitiation of the guardian deities and the festivals held in their honour are considered to be sufficient to curb

Tutelary deities.

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776 [782] the malignant propensities of those spirits. The most popular of the festivals is the *Mandalam*, which begins on the first of 796 Vrischigam (middle of November) and lasts for forty-one days. 776 In addition to the daily *pújas* to the image of Bhagavati by Brahman priests, special rites and ceremonies (*Kúlamezhuthum Pattum*) are also performed by a particular class of Sudras to the figure of the goddess made on the floor by means of 776 [534] coloured powders, while the devotees sing songs in her praise 796 [532] to the accompaniment of lute-like musical instruments. A man in a fantastic dress with an array of jingling bells round his loins, heavy sounding bell-metal anklets on each foot and a scythe-shaped sword in his hand impersonates the goddess and dances to the sound of tom-toms round the figure of the goddess Bhadrakáli on the floor. The *Velichapád*, as he is called, [785] becomes highly excited and in his frenzy sometimes even cuts [787] his forehead and causes it to bleed. He speaks, or rather the deity speaks through him, in broken yet commanding tones wholly unlike his own and makes oracular responses to the enquiries addressed to him.

796 On a night in the latter part of the month of Dhanu (early 776 in January), a golden image of the goddess is placed on the back [532] of a big decorated elephant, and, amidst the beating of drums, [788] the firing of pop-guns and crackers, is taken out in procession. [231] The elephant with the goddess is supported on each side by elephants whose numbers vary according to the means of the [791] villagers. The *Velichapád* is indispensable and is accompanied by a group of well-dressed women and girls, each carrying in her hand a plate (*tálam*) full of rice and a light placed on the [782] top of it. The festival ends with a display of fire-works, and the ceremony closes with the sacrifice of goats or fowls. On the same principle but on different lines are celebrated various propitiatory and sacrificial festivals in honour of the other [782] aforesaid deities. Generally, after the harvests, the *Velichapáds* are taken out in procession to the Hindu houses in each village to receive offerings of a measure of paddy and small coins.

776 *Sásta* or *Ayyappan*.—According to Keralólpathi, Parasu- 778 rama with the object of protecting the newly created country (Kérala) is said to have established many temples and dedicat- [788] ed them to this deity. The most important of these is at Sabarimala in the Chengannur Taluk of Travancore, which

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attracts a very large number of pilgrims during the *Mandala púja* from Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. This deity is peculiar to these parts, where he has the largest number of worshippers.[1]

Demon worship.

The worship of the tutelary deities above described is to a very great extent the outcome of a belief in, and a constant fear of, the influence of demons and evil spirits on mankind, a belief which has existed from a very remote period. The worship of demons is confined to the lower orders and has no connection with the higher forms of Hinduism, and yet this belief in demons is so wide-spread that not even the Brahmans are free from it. In every part of the State, in Malabar and in Travancore, magicians and sorcerers, from the highest Nambuthiri to the lowest Parayan, find employment in exorcising their baneful influences. Among the Pánans, Mannáns and Parayans, magic, sorcery, and witchcraft are a hereditary profession, and among the Nambuthiripáds of Kallúr, Káttumatam, and Chennamangalam are to be found special family deities by whose aid they are supposed to avert the actions of demons and spirits. It is curious to note that there are exorcists even among Christians and Mussalmans; and another interesting fact in connection with this is that the high caste Hindus exercise their magic influence by propitiating, by the aid of their sacred *mantrams*, the more refined and sublime manifestations of God, while the low caste-men propitiate Káli in her more hideous aspects. The ordinary people make a distinction between *Bhútas* on the one hand, and *Prétas* and *Pisáchas* on the other. The former are regarded as the messenger of Siva and his consort Sakti, while the latter are the souls of the departed who have died a violent and unnatural death by suicide, murder, or by drowning, and they are believed to be demons who wander about inflicting injury upon mankind in various ways. At noon and at midnight are the chief hours when they attempt to seize or possess those who walk in lonely places or take shelter under tamarind trees or on the sides of tanks. At night the demons are believed to call loudly in order to allure people out of their homes into distant jungles and there to kill them; hence, as a rule, at night a call is not responded to until it is repeated a fourth

1. Vide Religion of the Ishuvans, Vol. I, page 313.

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775 [881] [846] [789] [782] time. At the period of puberty and after child-birth women are especially liable to the attacks of these aërial beings. Charms and incantations, offerings and sacrifices, are the most requisite to counteract the evils that demons do, and iron rings, iron staffs, and leather shoes, are some of the specifics that help to keep the demons at a distance.

They make their abode chiefly in the palmyra and *pála* [787] trees, but some of them occupy even dwelling houses. Others take the shape of human beings, while yet others possess human beings.

775 782 Their name is legion, and they exist by the offerings of their votaries and their tormented victims. Against the machinations of these demons, the sorcerers and exorcists bring to [776] [791] bear the influence of their special guardian deities who in turn must be propitiated with offerings before they can be called upon to use their beneficial strength. In the case of the evil [783] spirit of him who has died an unnatural death, a Brahman magician purifies the spirit by means of certain ceremonies called *Tilahóma* (an offering of sesamum seeds to *agni* or fire). [789] A Chendus Nambuthiri presides at such ceremonies and transfers the spirit to an image of gold, silver, or wood which is afterwards placed in a Vishnu temple or enshrined in a small building put up for that purpose, there to rest in peace.

771 346 775 [753] [796] In the State, temples are dedicated to various demons, the chief among them being the Avanangáttil Cháttan in Triprayar. The temples dedicated to the small-pox demon correspond to the *Péy Kóvils* or devil temples of the Tamil Districts. In these temples are to be found the instruments and symbols of demon worship, the dancing sticks or wands, the priests' garments, tridents, etc., whilst in others there is nothing save the images of demons. There is also an officiat- [793] [794] ing priest, who is the devil driver and the devil dancer, and who at times even becomes a *Velichapád* inspired to communicate to the votaries, who consult him in times of illness and calamity, the wishes and intentions of that particular demon.

771 225 **Worship of animals and plants.** To a Hindu all organic life is sacred, and his creed is not to injure any living thing, while among the animals worshipped by him the cow occupies the first place. The cow is *Kámadhénu*, the giver of all things, and hence whenever a cow is approached, it is touched

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[789] children. Tiger's whiskers have also the same efficacy against
[825] demoniacal influence. The flesh is eaten as medicine, while
[757] the skin boiled in gingelly oil and strained into the ear, removes deafness.

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825 There is a common belief that, should the nest of a brahmany kite be found, and one of the young ones be attached to it by a string, the squall breaks away, generally leaving a portion of the line attached to the nest as it becomes strong. The
[789] nest which is formed of sticks should then be thrown into a running stream, when, if any of the sticks that compose it float against the current, they will, on being applied to any fetters, cause them immediately to fly into a thousand fragments.

[171] The owl which is an emblem of wisdom in Europe, and the goose that of stupidity, completely change their respective places in the east, the former becoming a symbol of stupidity, the latter that of wisdom.

[787] The hooting of the owl heard at night, has, in all parts of the world and in all ages, been considered ominous of
[763] evil, and is consequently much dreaded. In Cochin, it is generally believed, that the hooting of an owl betokens an impending calamity or even the death of an individual near whose abode its loathsome cry is heard; and so, dwellers in the neighbouring houses at once turn out and drive it away.

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539 Jack-o'-lantern:—These are called *Kollykatta Pisichus*
[776] (ghosts which emit fire from their mouths), and make their appearance on the side of tanks, rivers, and marshy places during rainy or foggy nights. They fly away or disappear at the sight of men and are much dreaded by the people.

Preëminent among the trees in the town of Cochin, and towering above all others along the sea-shore and sides of the back-water are the cocoanut palms (cocos nucifera linn), every portion of which, from the leaves to the roots, may be turned to some useful purpose.

[776] There is a tradition that the Raja of Benares, who was a stre-
[643] nuous worshipper of one supreme God, and rejected the custom of making offerings to inferior divinities, became, in course of time, almost equal to the Gods, and created many of the grains now in common use. As his powers increased, so did his ambition, and he meditated creating another species of human beings very superior to anything then existing in the world. But after he had completed its head, the demi-gods became alarmed and

588 invited to the girl's house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and, in the presence of friends and castemen, ties a tāli (marriage badge) round her neck, and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble. [787] Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined along with those of her enangan (a recognised member of one's own class) families, and the boy whose horoscope is found to agree with hers is marked out as a fit person to tie the tāli, and a day is fixed for the tāli-tying ceremony by the astrologer, and information given to the Karanavan * (senior male in a tarwad) of the boy's family. The feast is called ayaniūnu, and the boy is thenceforth called Manavālan or Pillai (bridegroom). From the house in which the Manavālan is entertained a procession is formed, preceded by men with swords, and [613] shields shouting a kind of war-cry. In the meantime a procession starts from the girl's house, with similar men and cries, and headed by a member of her tarwad, to meet the other procession, and, after meeting the Manavālan, he escorts him to the girl's house. After entering the booth erected for the purpose, he is conducted to a seat of honour, and his feet are washed by the brother of the girl, who receives a pair of cloths. The Manavālan is then taken to the centre of the booth, where bamboo mats, carpets and white cloths are spread, and seated there. The brother of the girl then carries her from inside the house, and, after going round the booth three times, places her at the left side of the Manavālan. The father of the girl then presents new cloths tied in a kambli (blanket) to the pair, and with this [613] new cloth (called manthravadi) they change their dress. [564] The wife of the Karanavan of the girl's tarwad, if she be

* The rights and obligations of Karanavans are fully dealt with by Moore, Malabar Law and Custom, 3rd edition, 1905.

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of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting [613]
on anklets, etc. The purōhit (officiating priest) called [564]
Elayath (a low class of Brāhmans) then gives the tāli [793]
to the Mānavālan, and the family astrologer shouts [787]
muhurtham (auspicious hour), and the Manavālan,
putting his sword on the lap, ties the tāli round the
neck of the girl, who is then required to hold an
arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families [556]
a Brāhmani sings certain songs intended to bless the [533]
couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her
presence, a Nāyar, versed in songs, performs the office.
The boy and girl are then carried by enangans to [783]
a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house,
where they are required to remain under a sort of pollu-
tion for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in
some neighbouring tank (pond) or river, holding each
other's hands. After changing their clothes they come
home, preceded by a procession. Tom-toms (native [534]
drums) and elephants usually form part of the proces- [231]
sion, and turmeric water is sprinkled. When they come
home, all doors of the house are shut, and the Manavālan is
required to force them open. He then enters the house,
and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt
and female friends of the girl then approach, and give
sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the [264]
boy, and, after taking their meal together from the same
leaf, they proceed to the booth, where a cloth is severed
into two parts, and each part given to the Manavālan
and girl separately in the presence of enangans and
friends. The severing of the cloth is supposed to [586]
constitute a divorce." "The tearing of the cloth," [184]
Mr. Fawcett writes, "is confined to South Malabar.
These are the essentials of the ceremony, an adjunct to [765]
which is that, in spite of the divorce, the girl observes

589 184 Manavālan arrives in rich attire. He is often preceded by a sort of body guard with sword and shield who utter a curious kind of cry, and is met at the gate of the girl's house by a bevy of matrons with lamps and salvers decorated with flowers and lights, called talams. A man of the girl's family washes his feet, and he takes his seat in the pandal on the girl's right. Sometimes the girl's father at this stage presents new cloths (mantravādi or mantrokŏdi) to the pair, who at once don them. The girl's father takes the tāli, a small round plate of gold about the size of a two-anna bit, with a hole at the top, from the goldsmith who is in waiting, pays him for it, [787] and gives it to the Manavālan. The karnavan or father of the girl asks the astrologer thrice if the moment has arrived, and, as he signifies his assent the third time, the Manavālan ties the tāli round the girl's neck amidst the shouts of those present. The Manavālan carries the girl indoors to the macchu, and feasting brings the day to [533] a close. Tom-toming and other music are of course incessant accompaniments throughout as on other festal occasions, and the women in attendance keep up a curious kind of whistling, called kurava, beating their lips with their fingers. On the fourth day, girl and Manavālan go in procession to the temple richly dressed. The boy, carrying some sort of sword and shield, heads [782] the party. If the family be one of position, he and the girl must be mounted on an elephant. Offerings are made to the deity, and presents to the Brāhmans. They then return home, and, as they enter the house, the Manavālan who brings up the rear is pelted by the boys of the party with plantains, which he wards off with his shield. In other cases, he is expected to make a pretence of forcing the door open. These two usages are no doubt to be classed with those marriage ceremonies which take the

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form of a contest between the bridegroom and the bride's relatives, and which are symbolic survivals of marriage by capture. The Manavālan and the girl next partake of food together in the inner pandal—a proceeding which obviously corresponds to the ceremonious first meal of a newly-married couple. The assembled guests are lavishly entertained. The chief Kovilagans and big Nāyar houses will feed 1,000 Brāhmans as well as their own relations, and spend anything up to ten or fifteen thousand rupees on the ceremony."

Concerning the tāli-kettu ceremony in Travancore Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes as follows. "After the age of eleven, a Nāyar girl becomes too old for this ceremony, though, in some rare instances, it is celebrated after a girl attains her age. As among other castes, ages represented by an odd number, *e.g.*, seven, nine, and eleven, have a peculiar auspiciousness attached to them. Any number of girls, even up to a dozen, may go through the ceremony at one time, and they may include infants under one year—an arrangement prompted by considerations of economy, and rendered possible by the fact that no civil or religious right or liability is contracted as between the parties. The duty of getting the girls of the tarwad 'married' devolves on the karanavan, or in his default on the eldest brother, the father's obligation being discharged by informing him that the time for the ceremony has arrived. The masters of the ceremonies at a Nāyar tāli-kettu in Travancore are called Machcham-pikkar, *i.e.*, men in the village, whose social status is equal to that of the tarwad in which the ceremony is to be celebrated. At a preliminary meeting of the Machcham-pikkar, the number of girls for whom the ceremony is to be performed, the bridegrooms, and other details are settled. The horoscopes are examined by the village

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[787] astrologer, and those youths in the tarwads who have passed the age of eighteen, and whose horoscopes agree with those of the girls, are declared to be eligible. The ola (palm-leaf) on which the Kaniyan (astrologer) writes his decision is called the muhurta charutu, and the individual who receives it from him is obliged to see that the ceremony is performed on an auspicious day in the near future. The next important item is the fixing of a wooden post in the south-west corner or kannimula of the courtyard. At the construction of the pandal (booth) the Pidakakkar or villagers render substantial aid. The mandapa is decorated with ears of corn, and hence called katirmandapa. It is also called mullapandal. On the night of the previous day the kalati or Brâhman's song is sung. A sumptuous banquet, called ayaniunnu, is given at the girl's house to the party of the young man. The ceremony commences with the bridegroom washing his feet, and taking his seat within the pandal. The girl meanwhile bathes, worships the household deity, and is dressed in new cloths and adorned with costly ornaments. A Brâhman woman ties a thread round the girl's left wrist, and sings a song called Subhadraveli, which deals with the marriage by capture of Subhadra by Arjuna. Then, on the invitation of the girl's mother, who throws a garland round his neck, the bridegroom goes in procession, riding on an elephant, or on foot. The girl's brother is waiting to receive him at the pandal. A leading villager is presented with some money, as if to recompense him for the permission granted by him to commence the ceremony. The girl sits within the mandapa, facing the east, with her eyes closed. The bridegroom, on his arrival, sits on her right. He then receives the minnu (ornament) from the Ilayatu priest, and ties it round the girl's neck. A song is sung called

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588 184 (574) system prevails, all members of such families, both male and female, are also provided with meals. On the third day, the villagers are again entertained to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding, and on the fourth day the girls are taken out in procession for worship at the nearest temple amidst tom-toms and shouting. After this a feast is held, at which friends, relatives, and villagers are given a rich meal. With the usual distribution of pān-supāri, sandal and flowers, the invited guests depart. (431) Presents, chiefly in money, are made to the eldest male member of the family by friends and relatives and villagers, and with this the ceremony closes. From the (787) time of fixing the first pole for the pandal to the tying of the tāli, the village astrologer is in attendance on all ceremonial occasions, as he has to pronounce the auspicious moment for the performance of each item. During (536) the four days of the marriage, entertainments, such as Kathakali drama or Ottan Tullal, are very common. When a family can ill-afford to celebrate the ceremony on any grand scale, the girls are taken to the nearest temple, or to the illam of a Nambūdri, if they happen to belong to sub-divisions attached to illams, and the tāli (735) is tied with little or no feasting and merriment. In the northern taluks, the very poor people sometimes tie the tāli before the Trikkakkarappan on the Tiruvonam day."

An interesting account of the tāli-kettu ceremony is given by Duarte Barbosa, who writes as follows.* "After they are ten or twelve years old or more, their mothers perform a marriage ceremony for them in this manner. They advise the relations and friends that they may come to do honour to their daughters, and they

* *Op. cit.*

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sambandham ceremony all over Kēralam are in the main the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically; the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony; the usual hour at which the ceremony takes place; the presentation of dānam (gifts) to Brāhmans; sumptuous banquet; the meeting of the bride and bridegroom, are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted sambandhams in all parts of Kēralam alike. But here I would state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to are gone through at all sambandhams among respectable Nāyars; and I would further state that they ought to be gone through at every sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the pudamuri or vastradānam as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of sambandham, I consider the pudamuri the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. The preliminary ceremony in every pudamuri is the examination of the horoscopes of the bride and bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down

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[787] the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf, with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes agree, a day is then and there fixed for the [212] celebration of the marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of cadjan (palm leaf), one of which is handed over to the bride's Karanavan, and the other [791] to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and the [574] bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and the former also receives presents in the shape of [431] money or cloth. This preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed at all pudamuris in North Malabar, is called pudamuri kurikkal, but is unknown in South Malabar. Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the celebration of the pudamuri, the bridegroom visits his Karanavans and elders in caste, [584] to obtain formal leave to marry. The bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the day appointed, the bridegroom proceeds after sunset to the house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends. He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house by the bride's party, and conducted with his friends to seats provided in the tekkini [431] or southern hall of the house. There the bridegroom [574] distributes presents (dānam) or money gifts to the Brāhmans assembled. After this, the whole party is treated to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then taken by one of his friends to the padinhatta or principal room of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought with them a quantity of new cloths, and betel leaves and nuts. The

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however, my experience that sambandham was rare on the side of the man before twenty-seven." "The Karanavan," Mr. Rāman Menon writes, "and the women of his household choose the bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and, if they agree, the astrologer is sent for, and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place, two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and, when on the point of leaving, they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have sambandham with . . . . (naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony. The proposal is accepted with pleasure, and the party from the bridegroom's house returns home. Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride, as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M., and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the taravad), areca nuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household, and which are distributed to the guests. When the bride's house is far away, the bridegroom makes his procession thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at the bride's house, they sit awhile, and are again

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Vishu, and Thiruvathīra festivals, she sends besides a little money, areca nuts, betel and tobacco. The money sent should be 4, 8, 16, 32, or 64 rupees. Higher sums are very rarely sent. Before long, the women of the husband's house express a longing for the girl-wife to be brought to their house, for they have not seen her yet. Again the astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day he fixes, two or three of the women go to the house of the girl, or, as they call her, Ammāyi (uncle's wife). They are well treated, and presently bring away the girl with them. As she is about to enter the gate-house of her husband's taravad, the stile of which she crosses right leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a burning lamp and a brass plate (thālam), and precede her to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated on a mat, and a burning lamp, a nāzhi (measure) of rice, and some plantains are placed before her. One of the younger women takes up a plantain, and puts a piece of it in the Ammāyi's mouth; a little ceremony called madhuram tītal, or giving the sweets for eating. She lives in her husband's house for a few days, and is then sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or cloths, which are gifts of the senior woman of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious. In a big taravad, where there are many women, the Ammāyi does not, as a rule, get much sympathy and good-will in the household, and, if she happens to live temporarily in her husband's house, as is sometimes, though very rarely the case in South Malabar, and to be the wife of the Karanavan, it is observed that she gets more than her share of whatever good things may be going. Hence the proverb, 'Place Ammāyi Amma on a stone, and grind her with another stone.' A sambandham ceremony at

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In a recent account of a Nāyar wedding in high life in Travancore, the host is said to have distributed flowers, attar, etc., to all his Hindu guests, while the European, Eurasian, and other Christian guests, partook of cake and wine, and other refreshments, in a separate tent. The Chief Secretary to Government proposed the toast of the bride and bridegroom. 585 177

The following note on Nāyar pregnancy ceremonies was supplied to Mr. Fawcett by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nāyar. "A woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh month, she (at least among the well-to-do classes) bathes, and worships in the temple every morning, and eats before her morning meal a small quantity of butter, over which mantrams (consecrated formulæ) have been said by the temple priest, or by Nambūtiris. This is generally done till delivery. Another, and even more important ceremony, is the puli-kuti (drinking tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by rich and poor alike, on a particular day in the ninth month. The day and hour are fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins with the planting of a twig of the ampasham tree on the morning of the day of the ceremony in the principal courtyard (natu-muttam) of the taravād. At the appointed hour or muhūrtam, the pregnant woman, after having bathed, and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (vatakini or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastward. The ammayi, or uncle's wife, whose presence on the occasion is necessary, goes to the courtyard, and, plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his 843 [264] [787] [604] 843 593

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Malabar. "The first regular ceremony performed during pregnancy is known as pulikudi or drinking tamarind, which corresponds to the Pumsavanam of the Brâhmans. But there are other observances of less importance, which commonly, if not invariably, precede this, and may be considered as corresponding to the Garbharakshana (embryo or womb protection) ceremony sometimes performed by Brâhmans, though not one of the obligatory sacraments. Sometimes the pregnant woman is made to consume daily a little ghee (clarified butter), which has been consecrated by a Nambûdiri with appropriate mantrams. Sometimes exorcists of the lower castes, such as Pânans, are called in, and perform a ceremony called Balikkala, in which they draw magic patterns on the ground, into which the girl throws lighted wicks, and sing rude songs to avert from the unborn babe the unwelcome attentions of evil spirits, accompanying them on a small drum called tudi, or with bell-metal cymbals. The ceremony concludes with the sacrifice of a cock, if the woman is badly affected by the singing. The pulikudi is variously performed in the fifth, seventh, or ninth month. An auspicious hour has to be selected by the village astrologer for this as for most ceremonies. A branch of a tamarind tree should be plucked by the pregnant woman's brother, who should go to the tree with a kindi (bell-metal vessel) of water, followed by an Enangatti* carrying a hanging lamp with five wicks (tukkuvilakku), and, before plucking it, perform three pradakshinams round it. In the room in which the ceremony is to be

* An Enangan or Inangan is a man of the same caste and sub-division or marriage group. It is usually translated "kinsman," but is at once wider and narrower in its connotation. My Enangans are all who can marry the same people that I can. An Enangatti is a female member of an Enangan's family.

846 which they are prohibited from entering temples and
[613] holy places." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar
[844] that the first act done, when a male child is born, is to
[828] beat the earth with a cocoanut leaf, and, if the issue is a female, to grind some turmeric in a mortar, with the object, it is said, of removing the child's fear.

553 In connection with post-natal ceremonies, Mr. Bala-
[846] krishnan Nāyar writes further that "the twenty-seventh
[821] day after the child's birth, or the first recurring day of the star under which it was born, marks the next impor-
[613] tant event. On this day, the Karanavan of the family gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk mixed with
[574] sugar and slices of plantain. Then he names the child, and calls it in the ear by the name three times. This is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the expenses of which are met by the father of the child.
852 With the Nāyar, every event is introduced by a cere-
853 monial. The first meal of rice (chorūn) partaken of by the child forms no exception to the rule. It must be remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some time after birth, the practice being to give it flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery (crude sugar). There is a particular variety of plantain, called kunnan, used for this purpose. Rice is given to the child for the first
[787] time generally during the sixth month. The astrologer fixes the day, and, at the auspicious hour, the child, bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the duty of the father to provide) is brought, and laid on a plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a lighted brass lamp placed near. On the leaf are served a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind, salt, chillies, and sugar. [In some places all the curries, etc., prepared for the attendant feast, are also served.]

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are set forth with a plate, if possible of silver, containing 852
milk, honey, and bits of a sort of plantain called kunnan, together with three jack leaves folded to serve as spoons. The mother brings the child newly bathed, and places it 852
in his Karnavan's lap. The goldsmith is in attendance 613
with a string of five beads (mani or kuzhal) made of the [326]
panchaloham or five metals, gold, silver, iron, copper [823]
and lead, which the father ties round the baby's waist. The Karnavan, or the mother, then administers a spoonful of the contents of the plate to the child with each of the jack leaves in turn. The father's sister, or other [853]
female relative, also administers some, and the Karnavan then whispers the child's name thrice in its right ear.

"The name is not publicly announced till the Chōr- 553
unnu or Annaprāsanam (rice giving), which takes place [787]
generally in the sixth month, and must be performed at an auspicious moment prescribed by an astrologer. The paraphernalia required are, besides the five-wicked lamp, some plantain leaves on which are served rice and four kinds of curry called kalan, olan, avil, and ericchakari, some pappadams (wafers of flour and other ingredients), plantains and sweetmeats called uppēri (plantains fried in cocoanut oil). The mother brings the child newly 553
bathed, and wearing a cloth for the first time, and places 613
it in the Karnavan's lap. The father then ties round the child's neck a gold ring, known as muhurta mothiram (auspicious moment ring), and the relatives present give the child other ornaments of gold or silver according to their means, usually a nūl or neck-thread adorned with one or more pendants, an arannal or girdle, a pair of bangles, and a pair of anklets. The Karnavan then, [782]
after an oblation to Ganapathi, gives the child some of the curry, and whispers its name in its right ear three times. He then carries the child to a cocoanut tree

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no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. 764 613 This is called ashtagaya srādh. It puts an end to the [769] need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the [775] collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important, [787] the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living members of the taravād, cause miscarriage to the women, possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on. On 764 the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory ceremony. 613 Until this has been done, any one touched by any 783 member of the taravād should bathe before he enters his house, or partakes of any food. A man of the [564] Athikurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil, in which some gingelly seeds have been put, over the persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling, and the bath which follows it, remove the death pollution. The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his offices [465] on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the taravād. In the case of death of a senior member of a 766 taravād, well-to-do and recognised as of some importance, 613 there is the feast called pinda atiyantaram on the 765 sixteenth day after death, given to the neighbours and 302 friends. With the observance of this feast of pindams there is involved the dīksha, or leaving the entire body unshaved for forty-one days, or for a year. There is no variable limit between forty-one days or a year. The [184] forty-one-day period is the rule in North Malabar. I have seen many who were under the dīksha for a year. He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew of the deceased. One member only of the taravād bears 766 the mark of mourning by his growth of hair. He who 765 is under the dīksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly 613 seeds to the spirits of the deceased every morning after [782] his bath, and he is under restriction from women, from [784] [834]

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the present day, a sumptuous feast at the cost of each villager in rotation, and partaken of by all assembled, and a small offering to the temple, are all that remains to commemorate it. Astrology is believed in, and some of its votaries are spoken of as Trikalagnas, or those who know the past, present, and future. It is due to a curse of Siva on the science of his son, who made bold by its means to predict even the future of his father, that occasional mistakes are said to occur in astrological calculations. Sorcery and witchcraft are believed to be potent powers for evil. To make a person imbecile, to paralyse his limbs, to cause him to lavish all his wealth upon another, to make him deaf and dumb, and, if need be, even to make an end of him, are not supposed to be beyond the powers of the ordinary wizard. Next to wizardry and astrology, palmistry, omens, and the lizard science are generally believed in. In the category of good omens are placed the elephant, a pot full of water, sweetmeats, fruit, fish and flesh, images of gods, kings, a cow with its calf, married women, tied bullocks, gold lamps, ghee, milk, and so on. Under the head of bad omens come the donkey, a broom, buffalo, untied bullock, barber, widow, patient, cat, washerman, etc. The worst of all omens is beyond question to allow a cat to cross one's path. An odd number of Nāyars, and an even number of Brāhmans, are good omens, the reverse being particularly bad. On the Vinayaka-chaturthi day in the month of Avani, no man is permitted to look at the rising moon under penalty of incurring unmerited obloquy.

"The chief religious festival of the Nāyars is Ōnam, which takes place in the last week of August, or first week of September. It is a time of rejoicing and merriment. Father Paulinus, writing in the latter half of the

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significance. The former typifies the attempt which these maidens make in order to hang themselves on these instruments, and destroy their lives in consequence of the lamented demise of their sexual deity Kāmadēvan. The beating on the water symbolises their beating their chests in expression of their deep-felt sorrow caused by their Cupid's death."

Yet another important festival, Vishu, is thus described by Mr. Gopal Panikkar. "Vishu, like the Ōnam and Thiruvathira festivals, is a remarkable event among us. Its duration is limited to one day. The 1st of Mētam (some day in April) is the unchangeable day, on which it falls. It is practically the astronomical new year's day. This was one of the periods when, in olden days, the subjects of ruling princes or authorities in Malabar, under whom their lots were cast, were expected to bring their new year's offerings to such princes. Failure to comply with the customary and time-consecrated demands was visited with royal displeasure, resulting in manifold varieties of oppression. The British Government, finding this was a great burden, pressing rather heavily upon the people, obtained as far back as 1790 a binding promise from those Native Princes that such exactions of presents from the people should be discontinued thereafter. Consequently the festival is now shorn of much of its ancient sanctity and splendour. But suggestive survivals of the same are still to be found in the presents, which tenants and dependents bring to leading families on the day previous to the Vishu. Being the commencement of a new year, native superstition surrounds it with a peculiar solemn importance. It is believed that a man's whole prosperity in life depends upon the nature, auspicious or otherwise, of the first things that he happens to fix his eyes upon

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on this particular morning. According to Nair, and even general Hindu mythology, there are certain objects which possess an inherent inauspicious character. For instance, ashes, firewood, oil, and a lot of similar objects are inauspicious ones, which will render him who chances to notice them first fare badly in life for the whole year, and their obnoxious effects will be removed only on his seeing holy things, such as reigning princes, oxen, cows, gold, and such like, on the morning of the next new year. The effects of the sight of these various materials are said to apply even to the attainment of objects by a man starting on a special errand, who happens for the first time to look at them after starting. However, with this view, almost every family religiously takes care to prepare the most sightworthy objects on the new year morning. Therefore, on the previous night they prepare what is known as a kani. A small circular bell-metal vessel is taken, and some holy objects are systematically arranged inside it. A grandha or old book made of palmyra leaves, a gold ornament, a new-washed cloth, some 'unprofitably gay' flowers of the konna tree (*Cassia Fistula*), a measure of rice, a so-called looking-glass made of bell-metal, and a few other things, are all tastefully arranged in the vessel, and placed in a prominent room inside the house. On either side of this vessel two brass or bell-metal lamps, filled with cocoanut oil clear as diamond sparks, are kept burning, and a small plank of wood, or some other seat, is placed in front of it. At about 5 o'clock in the morning of the day, some one who has got up first wakes up the inmates, both male and female, of the house, and takes them blindfolded, so that they may not gaze at anything else, to the seat near the kani. The members are seated, one after another, in the seat, and

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are then, and not till then, asked to open their eyes, and carefully look at the kani. Then each is made to look at some venerable member of the house, or sometimes a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins of the house begin to fire small crackers, which they have bought and stored for the occasion. The kani is then taken round the place from house to house for the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the noise of the crackers, the morning breaks, and preparations are begun for the morning meal. This meal is in some parts confined to rice kanji (gruel) with a grand appendage of other eatable substances, and in others to ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case on a grand scale. Immediately the day dawns, the heads of the families give to almost all the junior members and servants of the household, and to wives and children, money presents to serve as their pocket-money. In the more numerically large families, similar presents are also made by the heads of particular branches of the same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants. One other item connected with the festival deserves mention. On the evening of the previous day, about four or five o'clock, most well-to-do families distribute paddy or rice, as the case may be, in varying quantities, and some other accessories to the family workmen, whether they live on the family estates or not. In return for this, these labourers bring with them for presentation the fruits of their own labours, such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals (fruit of *Solanum Melongena*), etc., according as their respective circumstances permit. With the close of the midday meal the festival practically concludes. In some families, after

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Two-thirds of it go to the four Tiyans who carried the pūkalasams, and one-third to the five who carried the jannakalasams. Returning to the procession, we find it at the raised platform to the east of the temple. On this platform have been placed already an ordinary bamboo quart-like measure of paddy (unhusked rice), and one of rice, each covered with a plantain leaf. The principal devil-dancer takes a handful of rice and paddy, and flings it all around. The procession then visits in turn the gates of the gardens of the four owners of the temple. At each is a measure of rice and a measure of paddy covered with plantain leaves, with a small lamp or burning wick beside them, and the devil-dancer throws a handful towards the house. The procession then finds its way to a tree to the west, under which, on the platform, is now a measure of paddy and a lamp. Some Brāhmans repeat mantrams, and the elephant, the priest on his back and the sword in his hand, all three are supposed to tremble violently. Up to this time the procession has moved leisurely at a very slow march. Now, starting suddenly, it proceeds at a run to the temple, where the priest descends quickly from the elephant, and is taken inside the temple by the Mūssad priests. He, who has been carrying the sword all this time, places it on the sill of the door of the room in which it is kept for worship, and prostrates before it. The sword then shakes itself for fifteen minutes, until the chief priest stays its agitation by sprinkling on it some tirtam fluid made sacred by having been used for anointing the image of the goddess. This done, the chief amongst the devil-dancers will, with much internal tumult as well as outward convolutions, say in the way of oracle whether the dēvi has been pleased with the festival in her honour, or not. As he pronounces this oracular utterance, he falls

796 [787] in a sort of swoon, and everyone, excepting only the priests and temple servants, leaves the place as quickly as possible. The sheds which have been erected for 796 782 temporary habitation around the temple will be quickly demolished, and search will be made round about to make sure that no one remains near while the mystic rite of sacrifice is about to be done. When the whole place has been cleared, the four owners of the temple, who have stayed, hand over each a goat with a rope tied round its neck to the chief priest, and, as soon as they [793] have done so, they depart. There will remain now in the [534] temple three Mūssads, one drummer (Marayar), and two [794] temple servants. The reason for all this secrecy seems to lie in objection to let it be known generally that any sacrifice is done. I was told again and again that there 796 was no such thing. It is a mystic secret. The Mūssad 789 priests repeat mantrams over the goats for an hour as a 782 preliminary to the sacrifice. Then the chief priest dons 793 a red silk cloth, and takes in his hand a chopper-like sword in shape something like a small bill-hook, while the goats are taken to a certain room within the temple. This room is rather a passage than a room, as there are to it but two walls running north and south. The goats are made to stand in turn in the middle of this room, facing to the south. The chief priest stands to the east of the goat, facing west, as he cuts off its head with the chopper. He never ceases his mantrams, and the goats never flinch—the effect of the mantrams. Several cocks are then sacrificed in the same place, and over the carcasses of goats and cocks there is sprinkled charcoal powder mixed in water (karutta gurusi) and saffron (turmeric) powder and lime-water (chukanna gurusi), the flow of mantrams never ceasing the while. The three Mūssads only see the sacrifice—a part of the rite which

435 Site values of land for building are getting higher and higher in the 'town', chiefly because the Shoranur-Cochin Railway now runs through this place, the principal offices of the taluk are here, and a high school has just been opened. Rs. 500 per acre may be paid in the 'town'; Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 in the rest of the village area. But the best wet land fetches up to Rs. 1,500 per acre. Cultivable land fetches far higher prices than building land, because only land unfit for cultivation, of which there is enough, is used for building.

423 The practice of exchanging lands is unknown. Generally, [343] though not always, holdings are continuous. Field huts, built in the midst of their fields, are often used by big farmers. The seeds, the harvested paddy and other crops, the stock, the implements, etc., are kept there.

296 *Subsidiary industries.*—Weaving is not practised. In the north-eastern part of the State, however, handloom weaving of an exquisite sort and also of a rough character is practised.

285 Mat-weaving of an exquisite pattern out of certain reeds duly coloured is practised by a set of people locally known as 'Koravas.' 735 The condition of these men, however, is miserable. They have no capital, no organization or culture, but usually make their wares to order, though now and then a few enterprising middlemen avail [787] themselves of these people's skill. They talk a jargon of Tamil [791] and Malayalam, and their females, like gipsies, beg from house to house and profess themselves to be adepts in palmistry. They make mats costing from Re. 1 to Rs. 15 or Rs. 20. They yet live from hand to mouth; and I have my doubts whether they will be able to keep up their skill unless knowing people help to raise their economic condition.

564 Every village moreover contains within its borders the following castes who follow their hereditary crafts:—the Marasari (carpenter), Kallasari (mason), Tattan (goldsmith), Musari (brazier), Kollan (blacksmith), and Tolkollan (leather-worker). There are a few families of each of these castes in Watakanchery also. "As their services are much in requisition and as they earn better wages than unskilled labourers, they are still engaged in their hereditary occupation. The first five groups are socially in a par with each other. They all interdine, but do not intermarry. But the Tolkollans are considered inferior in status to the rest and cannot touch them without causing pollution, probably on account of their [595] work in leather which in its raw state is considered impure. Polyandry of the fraternal type was prevalent among them, several brothers marrying one wife and the children being treated as common to all. This practice however is fast dying out, if it has [783] not already done so." (Census Reports.) One special feature in the caste-hierarchy is that these people are made to stand at a specified distance while approaching the higher castes (24 feet is the rule).

466 These castes minister to the every day needs of the community, executing their work generally to order. As they are very poor, they cannot afford to work on their own account on a commercial 326 scale. The village usually contains a recognized *desa-asari* (village smith) to whom the farmers pay a certain amount of paddy at the harvesting season of the year for the repair of their implements. None but the village-smith is entitled to this dole. These may entertain apprentices from their own caste-people, though the